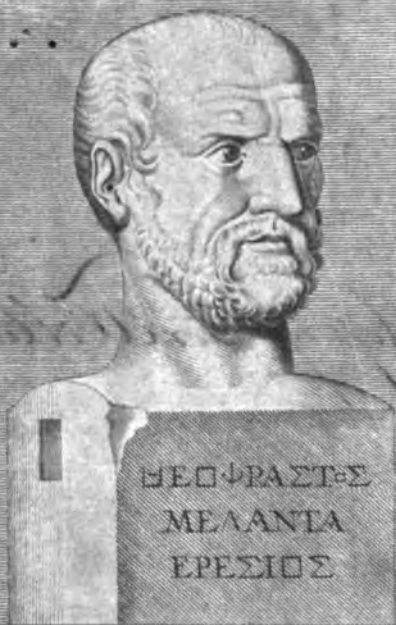


THEOPHRASTVS.



ΘΕΟΦΡΑΣΤΗΣ
ΜΕΛΑΝΤΙΑ
ΕΡΕΣΙΟΣ

*Apud Petrum de Max-
imis in marmore*

15-7. B. 20.38
X L A T H B 10.5-6
WORKS

Of Monsieur

De La BRUYERE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

CONTAINING,

- I. The *Moral Characters* of THEOPHRASTUS.
- II. The CHARACTERS, Or, the Manners of the Present Age.
- III. M. BRUYERE'S SPEECH upon his Admission into the *French Academy*.
- IV. An Account of the LIFE and WRITINGS of M. *Bruyere*. By Monsieur COSTE.

VOLUME I.

The Sixth Edition,

Revis'd by the *Paris Edition*: With an Original Chapter, *Of the Manner of Living with Great Men*. Written after the Method of M. *Bruyere*,

By N. ROWE, Esq.

LONDON: Printed for E. CURLL, at the Dial and Bible, and J. PEMBERTON, at the Buck and Sun; Both against St. Dunstan's Church in Fleetstreet. M DCC XIII.

Price of the Two Volumes, Nine Shillings.





ADVERTISEMENT,
CONCERNING

This New EDITION of the
Works of M. de la Bruyere.



THE great and deserved Reputation of the AUTHOR, as well as the undoubted Qualification of the several Translators, make it unnecessary to say any Thing in behalf either of the One or the Other. The Number of the French Editions, as well as English, is, to the Bookseller at least, a good Proof of Both: But waving the Vulgar Argument, It Sold well, and therefore it was Good, we may justly say in thy Case, It was Good, and therefore it Sold well. It would be an Affront to Men of Sense, to go about to display M. Bruyere's

ADVERTISEMENT.

Merit to them. It would be like telling ^{em}, according to his own Phrase, upon the like Occasion, that the River Seine runs through Paris; that there are Seven Days in the Week; and the like important Stuff. We shall therefore confine our selves to shew wherein this present Edition excells all that went before.

In the first Place then, we procured the last English Edition to be compared Verbatim with the last Paris Edition, (which is the Ninth) and by this Means came to a Discovery of all the Supplemental Reflections, which were in that Edition, and never before English'd: And these we have got translated and added to this present Edition; and that it might be as compleat as possible, we have not scrupled to translate even those Parts, which at first Sight may perhaps disoblige some who have a just Veneration for the Memory of our Glorious Deliverer the Late King WILLIAM: But such will be the readier to pardon this in our Author, when they consider that in a Love Twenty Places of his Book, he bears as hard upon his own Monarch, tho not so expressly.

Next to these Supplemental Reflections of Mr. Bruyere's, the Reader will find (what, likewise, was never before English'd) the Speech which the Author made to the French Academy, upon his Admission into that Illustrious Society. And with this, We thought to have closed the Whole; but having Intelligence, that a Pedantic Carthusian Fryar

ADVERTISEMENT.

of Rouen, under the Name of M. Vig-
il-Marville, but whose true Name is Bona-
ventura Dargogne, a Spaniard, had written a
satirical Piece, against the Person and Writings of
Bruyere; and likewise that Monsieur Coste
had, by an ingenious Answer, effectually un-
lock'd that Carthusian, We procured that Piece
of M. Coste's, and got it English'd by the same
Hand that did the Speech and Supplemental Re-
flections; and we doubt not but it will be very ac-
ceptable to the Reader, as well upon Account of the
Gentleman who is the Author of it, as for the
Sake of that Great Man whom he defends.



A
DEFENCE
OF

M. de la Bruyere,

And of his BOOK, Intitul'd,
*The CHARACTERS or MANNERS
of the Present Age, &c.*

IF what *M. de Vigneul-Marville* has lately publish'd in his *Melanges d'Histoire & de Literature*, against the Person and Writings of *M. de la Bruyere*, had been of any real Weight, I shou'd not have attempted to refute it, for fear of doing a Prejudice to *M. de la Bruyere* by an insufficient Apology. Many Authors have been so serv'd by their best Friends; witness he that wrote the *Traicte de la Delicateffe*, who undertaking to defend the Reverend Father *Bouhours* against the famous *Claudian*, only furnish'd the latter with a Subject for a new Triumph. Not that I am at all apprehensive

An Account of the Life and Writings

of falling into the same Inconvenience by repelling the Objections of M. de Vigneul-Marville; for they are, most of 'em, so weak, that there needs no great share of Penetration to destroy them, as I hope to make appear to all who shall give themselves the trouble to read the following Sheets with that Attention which is necessary for the well understanding them.

Those Objections, however, must have something dazzling in them, since the Judicious Author, who continues to give us the *Nouvelles de la Republique des Lettres* after the Learned Mr. Bayle, speaks thus: * *There is not much likelihood that M. de Vigneul-Marville will dispossess the Publick of the Esteem they have conceiv'd for the CHARACTERS of M. de la Bruyere: The Reader however will not repent of his reading the Criticism which he makes upon that Author, towards the end of his Work: I concluded from hence, that if his Criticism deserv'd to be read, it was likewise worth while to refute it. And this is what determin'd me to Publish this small Piece.*

M. de Vigneul-Marville attacks the Person of M. de la Bruyere, as also the Work which he publish'd under the Title of *The Characters or Manners of the Present Age*. I shall follow him step by step, and begin as he does with the Person of M. de la Bruyere.

* In that for January 1700. p. 92.

CHAP. I.

Of the Person of M. de la Bruyere.

I. IN the first place, I sincerely own I never saw M. de la Bruyere; I know him only by his Works: Nor does it appear that M. de Vigneul-Marville had any more particular Knowledge of him than my self; at least if we may judge by what he says of him in his Book. For 'tis upon the Description which M. de la Bruyere makes of himself in his own Writings, that M. de Vigneul-Marville conceives it is easy to know him: and it is not seen that he any where adds new Lineaments to the different Characters which he pretends that Author has giv'n us of himself in his Work. If therefore I can make appear that M. de Vigneul-Marville has perverted the Sense of M. de la Bruyere in every one of those places where he fancies that That Illustrious Author has describ'd himself, 'tis of no Importance I never saw M. de la Bruyere; nor have I at all the less Privilege to defend him against the false Accusations of his Adversary.

The main Character of M. de la Bruyere, says M. de Vigneul-Marville, is that of a Gentleman to be lett, who hangs out a Sign at his Door, and gives notice to the present and future Ages of the Antiquity of his Family. And this he does with the Air of a * Don Quixot, and in a manner perfectly delicate and fine. "I here de-

* Melanges d'Histoire & de Literature, Anno 1700. p. 325.

An Account of the Life and Writings

" declare it openly, * says he, and desire all Men to
" take notice of it, that none may be surpriz'd
" hereafter: If ever any Great Man shall think
" me worthy of his Care; if ever I happen to
" make my Fortune, there is one *Geoffry de la Bruyere*,
" whom all the Chronicles of *France* place among
" the Men of the highest Rank, that follow'd
" *Godfrey of Bouillon* to the Conquest of the Holy
" Land; this *Geoffry* shall then be the Man from
" whom I am descended in a direct Line.

M. de Vigneul-Marville finds in these Words a ridiculous and unexampled Vanity: But he had been more just to *M. de la Bruyere*, if he had seen therein an ingenious Satire upon such Men, who being by their own confession meanly born so long as they continue poor, yet fancy themselves well descended so soon as they happen to make a Fortune. 'Tis this idle Whim which *M. de la Bruyere* attacks so pleasantly in so many Passages of this Chapter. An ordinary Fellow, says he (a little before the Passage I just now quoted after *M. de Vigneul-Marville*), by often affirming he has seen some Prodigy, falsely persuades himself that he has seen it: Another, by concealing his Age, comes to believe at last that he's as young as he wou'd be thought: So the Man who, meanly Born, has got a habit of talking of his being descended from this Ancient Baron, or that Great Viscount, has the Pleasure to believe he is so descended, tho' there's nothing at all in it.

M. de la Bruyere, who knew how much all Orders of Men are infected with this Distemper of hoisting themselves above their Condition, in their own Minds, but especially in the Minds of Others, returns to the Charge: A good Gentleman, says he, strives to pass for a little Lord, and arrives to it. A Great

* These are *M. de la Bruyere's* own Words, in his Characters, Chap. XIV. entitled, Of Certain Customs.

of M. De la BRUYERÉ.

Lord can be satisfy'd with no less than the Title of a Prince; he changes his Coat of Arms, produces a new Genealogy, which d'Holier never made for him, arrogates to himself so many Titles, has so many Disputes about Rank and Precedency, that at last he really becomes a little Prince.

And, lastly, the more to expose the Ridiculousness of their ill-grounded Pretensions, M. de la Bruyere brings in himself as bewitch'd with this Passion, but in such a manner as shews plainly he knows the whole Weakness of it, and that he only speaks of himself that he might the more freely laugh at those who are actually touch'd with this Evil. *If ever any Great Man, says he, shall think me worthy of his Care, if ever I happen to make my Fortune, and so on, as before, then shall this Geoffry be the Man from whom I am descended in a direct Line.*

There is not a Word in this whole Passage but discovers the Irony the Author had in his Mind when he wrote it. M. de la Bruyere does not say he *Now* pretends to be descended from that Geoffry de la Bruyere, whom all the Chronicles of France place among the Men of the highest Rank that follow'd Geoffry of Bouillon in the Conquest of the Holy Land. But if ever he happen'd to make a Fortune, *then* this Geoffry is the Man from whom he is descended in a direct Line: He shou'd at *present* be puzzl'd to prove his Descent from that Great Lord: but *then* he wou'd no longer doubt it, but wou'd peremptorily aver it, and expect to be believ'd upon his own Word, as well as so many others who never pretended to Gentility till the Day they arrive to some great Fortune. If such Chimerical Gentlemen had taken it in their Heads to create to themselves these illustrious Ancestors at the time when they wore a Livery, or sold Cloth by the Ell, or follow'd the Plow-rail, Every body wou'd have laugh'd at them. Mean while, as their Original cannot change with

B 3

their

An Account of the Life and Writings,

their Fortune, and since they might with as good Grounds have bragg'd of their pretended Gentility, when they were Poor, as after they became Rich; M. de la Bruyere, who only brings them upon the Stage to expose them the more, declares beforehand, That, tho' he does not pretend to be descended ~~as yet~~ from one Geoffry de la Bruyere, whom all the Chronicles of France place among the Men of the highest Rank that follow'd Galfrey of Bouillon to the Conquest of the Holy Land, yet he will take care not to let slip so glorious a Distinction, if ever he shou'd happen to make his Fortune. Then Geoffry shall be the Man from whom he indisputably derives his Pedigree; and this, not by any remote Alliance, but in a direct Line, for the one will be as easily prov'd as the other. Now I wou'd ask any Man, Whether the Author cou'd have more sharply reprov'd the Folly of those Upstarts, who, content with their ordinary Original, while they live in a Condition suitable to it, on a sudden erect themselves into Men of Birth, so soon as they acquire an Estate? If a Man will take these Words of M. de la Bruyere literally, as M. de Vigneul-Marville does, I am sure he may as well fancy that the Celebrated Boileau wrote without Genius or Conduct, under pretence that he says, in speaking of himself,

* *Cotin and I by hazard only Write,
And never had been Poets but for spite;
And Witty as we think our selves, had best
To Rhime no more, to be no more a Jest.*

of M. De la BRUYERE.

Nothing is more usual with certain Writers, than to apply to themselves the Defects they wou'd reprove in others. Thus *Horace*, writing to one of his Friends, censures him severely, while he makes as if he drew his own Picture. "If my Friend shou'd ask you how I employ my self, * *says he to his Muse*, You may tell him, that having my Head fill'd with a Thousand glorious Projects, I lead a tedious disagreeable Life: Not that a Storm of Hail has spoil'd my Vines, or that my Olive-trees have been destroy'd by the excessive Heats: nor that the Murrain is got among my Cattel; but that, being rather sick in Mind than Body, I will hear of no Remedies; nor read or hearken to any thing that is likely to cure me: that I can't bear the sight of my most trusty Physicians: that I storm at my Friends who are for recovering me as soon as possible from the Illness that oppresses me: that I follow what will hurt me, and fly from what is good for me: that when I'm at *Rome*, my Head runs upon nothing but *Tivoli*; and when I'm at *Tivoli*, nothing but *Rome* will satisfy me.

I don't believe that any Man who has read *Horace*, and is ever so little acquainted with the Genius and Character of that famous Satyrist, can fancy he design'd to give us his own true Picture in these Words. No, 'tis manifest he only presents this Picture to his Friend, dextrously to engage him to consider it as if it were drawn for another; so that upon discovering therein his own proper Features, he may, if he thinks fit, set about amending himself. 'Tis in this very View M. de la Bruyere declares to us, that he will not fail to descend in a direct Line from one *Geoffry de la Bruyere*, whom all

An Account of the Life and Writings

the Chronicles of France, &c. Supposing he shou'd cap-
pen to make a Fortune.

And indeed if he had really believ'd he was de-
scended from that *Geoffry de la Bruyere*, might he not
have said without shuffling, that, whether he shou'd
make a Fortune or no, he cou'd boast of the Anti-
quity of his Family, since he cou'd trace his Pedi-
gree up to that Great Lord who follow'd *Godfry of*
Bouillon to the Conquest of the Holy Land?

If *M. de la Bruyere* had talk'd in this manner, *M.*
de Vigneul-Marville might then perhaps have had
some Reason to compare him to *Don Quixot*. But if
this Doughty Critic had read the Reflection which
immediately follows that which he so mistakenly
censures, he wou'd have seen that *M. de la Bruyere* too
well knew wherein real Nobility consisted, to make
an ostentatious Shew of an Illustrious Pedigree,
even tho' he might have been able to have prov'd
it, instead of priding himself in a Gentility with-
out proof, as his Censurer accuses him. If Gentility
be a Virtue, says that Great Man, *Whoever is not Vir-*
tuous, loses his Title; and if 'tis not a Virtue, 'tis a Tri-
fle. If 'tis a Happiness to be nobly descended, * says he
in another place, 'tis no less to have so much Merit,
that no body enquires whether we are so or no. Is it like-
ly that a Man who has such noble, such exalted Sen-
timents, shou'd be capable of falling into so foolish,
so childish a Vanity as he is so confidently charg'd
with by *M. de Vigneul-Marville*? Give me leave to
quote one more Place of the Characters which re-
veals, that *M. de la Bruyere* judg'd of the true Value
of things, without suffering himself to be impos'd
upon by vain Appearances. † Every Hour in itself,
as it respects us in particular, is the only One we can call

* Chap. II. Of Personal Merit.

† Chap. XIII. Of the Fashion; the last Paragraph.

of M. De la BRUYERÉ.

down. When once 'tis past, 'tis entirely lost, Millions of Ages can't retrieve it. Days, Months, Years fly away, and irrecoverably sink in the Abyss of Time. Time it self shall be destroy'd. 'Tis but one Point in the Immense Space of Eternity, and it shall be raz'd out. There are several light and frivolous Circumstances of Time, which are unstable, and pass away, and which I call FASHIONS, GRANDEUR, Favour, Riches, Power, Authority, Independance, Pleasure, Joy and Superfluity. What will become of these FASHIONS, when Time it self shall disappear? VIRTUE ALONE, THO' SO LITTLE IN FASHION, WILL BE ABLE TO SURVIVE TIME.

I very willingly transcrib'd this fine Passage here, because having read it a hundred Times with a new Pleasure, I thought, that tho' Others might have read it before, they wou'd not be pleas'd to see it again.

But to return to M. de Vigneul-Marville: If he did really believe that M. de la Bruyere vaunted of the Antiquity of his Family, like a Coxcomb and a true *Don Quixot*; what Name does he himself deserve for attempting to turn into Ridicule a Passage that was written for no other End but to make a Jest of that senseless Vanity which he ascribes to M. de la Bruyere? And here I can't forbear wondering at the fruitless Trouble so many learned Critics give themselves to explain certain Passages of Ancient Authors. It is visible from the contrary Meanings which they apply to those Passages, that they lend to their Authors a great many Thoughts which never once enter'd into their Heads. Nay, when all the Critics agree as to the Sense of some knotty Passage in *Virgil*, *Horace*, &c. it is more than probable that they are oftentimes mistaken: since we do not understand some figurative Places, even of a Modern Author, who wrote in our own Tongue, and liv'd in our own Time. M. de la Bruyere

An Account of the Life and Writings

Bruyere has not been dead above five Years. *My* Book is written in *French*, and treats of nothing but Matters common to Civil Life. It is read by every Body in *France* and Foreign Countries, where it is printed as often as in *France*. And yet here's a *Frenchman*, a Man of Letters, who endeavouring to criticize *M. de la Bruyere*, makes him speak the very Contrary of what he really says:

*Go, Doctor, after this, and rack your Brains,
Unravel Scripture, and grow lean with Pains.*

This, however, ought not to discredit the Reading of good Books, nor to discourage therefrom Persons who love to spend their Time in the most agreeable, as well as most profitable Manner they can. For, in short, if we do not always understand an Author, 'tis sometimes because he is not intelligible: and then there's no great Loss in not understanding him. It cannot be said we have misapply'd our Time, if in many other Places of his Book he makes us acquainted with Things that may do us any Good. In this Case we shou'd say as *Horace* did of a Good Poem, which had some Faults in it,

— *Ubi plura nitent, &c.*

" * When I meet with a great many Beauties in a
" Piece, I'm not offended with a few Faults which
" might have escap'd the Author through Inadvertency, or which the Impotence of human Nature
" cou'd not so well provide against." Sometimes too, what is very clear in a Book, seems to us Obscure, for want of reading with sufficient Attention. There's no Man, I believe, who is Bookishly

of M. De la BRUYERE.

En, but happens now and then to catch himself at this Fault. The only Remedy is to distrust our selves, and to read a Passage over and over again, before we decide it to be obscure, absurd or impertinent. And if any Person is oblig'd to take these Precautions, those more especially ought, who set up for public Censurers of other Men's Works. We shou'd not read a Book on purpose to find Fault with it, but purely to understand it. We shou'd see therein no more than what there precisely is, without diving into the Author's Intention beyond what he himself has discover'd to us. If M. de Vigneul-Marville had read M. de la Bruyere's Work in this Frame of Mind, he wou'd not have found so much Matter for the Censure which he passes upon his Person. This is what I flatter my self I have demonstrated with regard to the first Reproach he throws on him of his *being a Gentleman to lett, of hanging out a Sign at his Door, by giving notice to the present and future Ages of the Antiquity of his Family.* Never, I say, was Accusation worse grounded. I know not whether M. de Vigneul-Marville will confess it; but him excepted, I don't think any Body can doubt it, after reading what I have urg'd upon this Head. I say after reading what I have urg'd upon this Head, because I have seen some People of very good Sense, and among them some who I believe are not unknown to M. de Vigneul-Marville, who have taken this Passage of M. de la Bruyere's Book in the same manner he has done. According to the strict Laws of War I might have forbore this Confession: But I'm willing to let him see by this, that 'tis not the Love of a vain Triumph makes me enter the Lists with him, but the sole Desire of defending the Truth. I don't see how any very sound Judgement can be made of an Author from what is said of him in Conversation. A Man reads a Book in a hurry, to amuse himself, or to
refresh

An Account of the Life and Writings

refresh his Mind, which was tir'd by Multiplication of Business. Some time after he goes into Company. The Discourse falls upon some Places of that Book; he thinks he has retain'd the Sense of them, tho' utterly forgot the Words. This Sense displeases us. Others who dislike it as much as We do, maintain that the Author meant no such thing. This creates a Dispute. Each defends his Opinion with Warmth, and no-body bethinks himself of consulting the Words of the Author, which wou'd oftentimes reconcile all Parties, by shewing distinctly that what he said, is very rational and perfectly different from what he is made to say by some of the Company, and sometimes by all together. This is commonly the way of Criticizing upon Books in Company. The Method is ridiculous enough: but Custom will needs have it excus'd. However, the World has not the same Indulgence for those who make it their Business to Censure publicly other Men's Works. Men expect such Critics shou'd be somewhat more circumspect; and that before they make Reflections upon a Book, they read it again and again, till they are sure they are Masters of it. This is apparently what was not done by *M. de Vigneul-Marville*, at least with respect to the first Passage which he so rudely falls upon in *M. de la Bruyere's* Book, since he has taken it quite wrong, as I believe I have prov'd. Let us see if he has had better luck in what follows.

III. *It is not enough for M. de la Bruyere, * continues our Censor, to have the Character of a Gentleman to be lost, he must likewise have that of a Misanthrope so much in Fashion. He describes himself as such, when speaking of Opera's, he says enthusiastically,*

of M. De la BRUYERE.

* I wonder how 'tis possible that the Opera, with
" Music so perfect, and an Expence perfectly
" Royal, shou'd yet so successfully tire me.

Pray do but observe a little, says M. de Vigneul-Marville upon this, *What Expence is requisite, and what Pains to be taken to have the Honour, I don't say to divert (for that's beyond Human Power) but to tire M. de la Bruyere. Did the King lay out so many Millions in Building Versailles and Marly, purely to give this worthy Gentleman a fit of Tawning, and set him to Sleep? Yes I warrant ye.*

This is a wonderful fine Exclamation, but instructs us in nothing. Invectives are not Reasons. † The first Declamer of this Age has been more than once told so. A Man that wou'd attack an Author to purpose, must provide himself with good Arguments, and express them clearly, to the end that such as shall see them, may be struck with them. As for Rhetorical Figures, they may dazle the Mind, but can't persuade it. 'Tis a Fire of Straw, that goes out in a Moment. Methinks People shou'd in this respect be a little more cautious than they usually are. Writers are not the only Persons to whom this Advice is directed. Those who take upon them to instruct others by Public Harangues, have at least as much occasion for it: for nothing is more common than to see those Gentlemen evaporating their Spirits in vain Declamations, without minding to establish upon solid Arguments what they undertook to prove. If therefore M. de Vigneul-Marville believes M. de la Bruyere was in the wrong to say he was tir'd with an Opera, he ought to have shewn by sound Proofs, that nothing is

* Chap. I. Of Polite Learning, &c.

† Mr. Jurieu, Preacher and Professor in Theology at Rotterdam.

An Account of the Life and Writings

more entertaining than an Opera; that nothing is more proper to divert a reasonable Man than this sort of Dramatic Poetry; and that no one can dislike it without having an ill-contriv'd cross-grain'd Make of Mind. After he had shewn this in a convincing manner, he might have made himself merry at the Expence of *M. de la Bruyere*. Then all had been fair; Ironies, Comparisons, Similies, Exclamations, Apostrophes, and all those other brilliant Turns call'd *Figures of Rhetoric*. That would be Triumphant after Victory. And the By-stander, instead of being offended at the Victor's applauding himself in such a Case, does sometimes take a Pleasure to heighten his Triumph with fresh Acclamations. The most Nice, who are not over-sord of such Flourishings, do at least excuse it, and hear it without being angry. But to do this before-hand is all wrong; nothing seems to them more puerile or more insupportable. Men are as much shock'd at it as to hear a Soldier singing *Te Deum* before he has seen his Enemy.

If indeed *M. de la Bruyere* had barely told the World that he was tir'd with the Opera, notwithstanding the Beauty of the Decorations and the Charms of the Music, *M. de Vigneul-Marville* might justly have made himself a little merry with him; ev'n tho' the Opera had seem'd to Him as insipid as it did to *M. de la Bruyere*. The Author of *The Art of Thinking* finds fault with *Montaigne*, for affecting to entertain his Readers with nothing but his own Humours, Inclinations, Whims, Distempers, Virtues and Vices. This, says he, is of all Characters one of the most unbecomings in a Gentleman, and which proceeds from a Defect in Judgment as well as from a violent Love of one's self. Every body allows the Solidity of this Censure:

of M. De la BRUYERE.

and if M. de la Bruyere had been guilty of the same Weakness with St. Montagne, he had doubtless deserv'd to have been reprov'd for it in the same manner. But he had too much Sense to be guilty of that Error. He wrote to instruct Mankind, and not to amuse them with a Recital of Things so frivolous, as wou'd have been the History of what pleases or displeases Him. He wonders that an Opera with Music so perfect, and an Expence truly Royal, shou'd yet so successfully tire him. But he immediately gives good Reasons for its so doing; There are, says he, some Places in an Opera which make us desire more, and others that dispose us to wish it all over, according as we are pleas'd or offended with the Scenes, the Actions and the Things represented.

If, I say, M. de la Bruyere had barely told us that the Opera had, in short, successfully tir'd him, he had been liable to a just Censure: but not for the Reason that a Man must be very squeamish for not being delighted with a Spectacle, wherein the Prince has bestow'd so great an Expence. M. de Vignoul-Marville brings the King into the Quarrel very impertinently. The King was not the Author of the Opera, and consequently a Man may think it tedious, without offending the Royal Authority. To argue thus, favours a little of Cotin's Humour, who wou'd make the Contemning his Verses pass for a Crime against the State;

*Qui méprise Cotin, n'estime point son Roy,
Et n'a, selon Cotin, ni Dieu, ni foi, ni loi.*

Anglicè,

*Who likes not Atterbury, Bincks, and Birch,
They swear is neither Friend to Queen nor Church.*

An Account of the Life and Writings

Nay, that Poet was more excusable than M. de Vigneul-Marville, who is not perfectly interest'd in the Contempt a Man may have of Opera's; for I don't believe he ever concern'd himself in publishing any of his own making. "But, says M. de Vigneul-Marville, shall so great an Expence be made? shall such Pains be taken for the representing that Spectacle? And after all this, shall a Man come and say he's tir'd with it, and not be treated as a Misanthrope? Why not, if it is in reality a Spectacle proper in its Nature to produce that Effect? Tho' the Music be the most moving and most perfect in the World; tho' the Ears be agreeably flatter'd by delightful Consorts; tho' the Eyes are charm'd with the Beauty of the Decorations, and enchanted by the wonderful playing of the Machines: yet all this does not hinder the Opera from being tiresome, if the Subject of it be ill manag'd, if there's nothing that touches and affects the Mind, and if the Versification be harsh and dull. In this Case to despise an Opera, is a sign of a good Taste, and not the effect of a fantastical Resolution to condemn what all the World admires. And, on the contrary, to esteem an Opera with all these Faults, because 'tis accompany'd with fine Music, and magnificent Decoration, is to admire a counterfeit Jewel, because 'tis mingl'd with real ones; 'tis to take an Ass for a fine Spanish Horse, because the Housings are cover'd over with Gold and Precious Stones. But tho' an Ass is ever so richly Harnes'd, he's but an Ass still. So, if an Opera be a dull insipid Poem, 'twill still be so, in spite of the Music, Machines and Decorations that accompany it. And consequently it must be examin'd in itself, and independently of all these Additions, if we wou'd find out whether M. de la Bruyere's Judgment of it be right, or only owing to the Oddness of his Taste.

I know

of M. De la BRUYERE.

I know not whether M. de Vigneul-Marville is of the same Opinion with that Marquis,

* *Who wonders at the General Taste, and swears
He to the Opera for the Verse repairs.*

But it is plain that M. Boileau does not give this Sentiment to his Wou'd-be-wit Marquis for any other Purpose, than to let us see the Extravagance and Oddness of his Taste. Whence we may conclude, that according to M. Boileau, it is no very good Proof of *Misanthropie* (Inhumanity) not to admire an Opera; but that, on the contrary, to go to an Opera to admire it, is to declare oneself against the most general Taste, and to make oneself ridiculous by pretending to judge of what we don't understand.

But M. de Vigneul-Marville will perhaps say, that M. Boileau's Authority is no Proof. I agree it. But he must likewise agree that his is none neither; and that, set one Authority against t'other, many People will, in a Point like this, follow that of a famous Poet, preferably to that of a † Doctor in Law. In truth, if that Doctor had produc'd some Reasons in favour of Opera's, I shou'd have done wrong to have quoted those Verses of Boileau's; for Reason ought ever to prevail over Authority: And as every Lover of Truth ought to establish as a Law to himself, to embrace what he believes to be

M. Boileau. Ep. IX.

† I give this Title to M. Vigneul-Marville only by way of Allusion to what he tells us of himself in his Book, p. 42. viz. That he learnt the Civil Law of Antonio Delcampo. And accordingly, without examining here what his true Profession is, 'tis at least certain that he is not so good a Poet as M. Boileau: which sufficiently authorizes the Argument I use in this place.

An Account of the Life and Writings

grounded on Reason, however contrary it be to the Opinion of the greater Men, he ought not to be offended if others do so too. But I'm going to produce to M. *Vigneul-Marville* an Authority he will not dare to except against, or I'm deceiv'd, and which is back'd with very substantial Arguments. It is that of the Illustrious M. St. *Evremond*, who is no great Admirer of Opera's, and that too for much the same Reason with M. *de la Bruyere*. As he expresses his Mind more home, it belongs to M. *de Vigneul-Marville* to see whether M. St. *Evremond*, whom he owns for ** a celebrated Writer, who has giv'n to his Expressions all the Strength they were capable of within the Bounds of Reason*, has not departed from Reason here. If he believes that M. St. *Evremond* has been too free with Opera's, he must then put that Gentleman likewise in the Rank of *Misanthropes, who are so much in fashion*. And if he is not willing to affront him so highly for so small a matter; let him seek for other Proofs of M. *de la Bruyere's* *Misanthropie*, or let him ingenuously own that he was somewhat too precipitate in charging him with that Vice. But let us see whether it be true that M. St. *Evremond* expresses himself with so much Warmth against Opera's, as to deserve to be plac'd among the *Misanthropes* of this Age, as well as M. *de la Bruyere*. I have long, My Lord, had a Mind to give you my Thoughts concerning Opera's, (says he to the Duke of Buckingham, to whom he Addresses his Discourse;) and I will now gratify that Desire. I shall therefore begin with avowing freely to you, that I am no Admirer of those Musical Plays or Tragedies, which we see in our Time; I own indeed, that their Magnificence gives me some Pleasure, that their Machines have

* *Melanges d'Histoire de Literature*, p. 335, &c.

of M. De la BRÜYERE.

Something surprising, the Music in some places may be charming, and the whole together seems wonderful; but then you must grant me on the other hand, that these Wonders are extremely tedious; for where the Mind has so very little to do, the Senses, after the first Pleasure which the short-liv'd Surprise affords, must languish and doze. The Eyes grow weary of being continually fix'd upon the glaring Objects. In the beginning of the Consorts, the Audience observe the Justness of the Concords, and let none of the Varieties escape them, that join in the making up the Sweetness of the Harmony; soon after the Instruments stun us, and the Music seems no more to the Ears but a confused and undistinguishable Sound. But who can support the dull Tediouſness of the Recitativo, which has neither the Charm of Song, nor the agreeable Force of good Speaking? The Soul tired out with a long Attention to That in which we can find nothing affecting, retires into itself to find some secret Emotion, by which it may be touch'd; and the Mind, having in vain expected Impressions from without, has Recourse to empty Musings, or grows discontented with itself for being so useleſs to its own Satisfaction. In a word, the Fatigue is so great and so universal, that we only think how to get out; and all the Pleasure the tired Spectator can propose to himself, is THE HOPES OF A SPEEDY END TO THE SHOW.

The Reason why GENERALLT I SOON GROW WEARY AT AN OPERA is, That I never yet saw any Opera, which did not appear to me DESPICABLE, both in the Disposition of the Subject, and in the Verses. Now 'tis in vain to charm the Ear, and flatter the Eye, if the Mind remain unsatisfy'd; My Soul being in better Intelligence with my Mind, than with my Senses, struggles against the Impressions it might receive, or at least fails in giving an agreeable Consent to them, without which even the most delightful Object can never afford me any great Portion of Pleasure.

An Account of the Life and Writings

'Tis true, a Foolery set off with Music, Dances, Machines and Decorations, is a pompous and magnificent Foolery, but yet it is still a FOOLERY: 'Tis an ugly Ground to a beautiful Ornament, thro' which I yet discover the Ground with a great deal of Dissatisfaction.

What wou'd M. de Vigneul-Marville have said, if M. de la Bruyere had express'd himself so roughly? A Foolery set off with Music, Dances, Machines, and Decorations, is a pompous and magnificent Foolery, but yet it is a Foolery. To speak thus of the Opera, a Royal Spectacle, on which such great Expences had been made, and so much Pains taken!

* *Quis cælum terris non misceat, & mare cælo?*

What Boldness! what Temerity! what Insolence! this had been the least he cou'd have said; since he calls him *Misanthrope* for daring to say he knew not how the Opera with such perfect Music and a truly Royal Magnificence cou'd so successfully tire him.

When M. de Vigneul-Marville has shewn us the Weakness of the Arguments made use of by M. de St. Evremond and M. de la Bruyere, to persuade the World that an Opera was a very tedious Entertainment, he may then blame the Delicacy of M. St. Evremond, M. de la Bruyere, and of all those who are tir'd with an Opera. But till then, he has no Pretension to laugh at them; unless he thinks his Authority a Rule for the rest of Mankind to judge by. Tho' I have not the Honour to be acquainted with him, I'm confident he's too much of a Gentleman to arrogate to himself such a Privilege which was never yet granted to any Man in the Republic of Letters.



of M. De la BRUYERE.

IV. *M. de Vigneul-Marville* continuing to describe *M. de la Bruyere*, tells us, that in another Place of his Characters, * shifting the Part he had been acting, he assumes that of *Socrates*, and then brings in a Parcel of Fools of his own Invention, loading him with honourable Invectives. He disturbs himself, and supposes they are throwing on him bloody Reproaches, and no body so much as thinks of the poor Man. For indeed, who, till now, ever said of *M. de la Bruyere*, as of *Socrates*, that he was delirious, and a Fool with abundance of Wit, &c. *M. de la Bruyere* is *M. de la Bruyere*, as a Cat is a Cat, and that's all: Wise or otherwise, no body troubles himself about the Matter. What Man after this would not believe that *M. de la Bruyere* compar'd himself without any Ceremony to the Wise *Socrates*, in some Place of his Book? It is, however, certain that in the Passage which *M. de Vigneul-Marville* had his Eye upon, the Author speaks of no Body but *Socrates* from one End to t'other. This Critic had done well to have quoted the Place. I will do't for him, that the Reader may judge the better of the Solidity of his Remark. † 'Twas said of *SOCRATES*, that he was delirious, and a Fool with Abundance of Wit; but those Greeks who so freely characteriz'd that Great Man, not unjustly pass for Fools themselves. What whimsical Images, say they, does this Philosopher represent to us! What strange and particular Manners does he describe! Whence had he, or how could he collect these extraordinary Ideas? What Colours, what Pencil did he make use of? They are all Chimera's. They were deceiv'd, they were Monsters, they were Vices, but all so painted to the Life, that the very Sight of them

* Melanges, &c. p. 327.

† Chap. XII. Of Judgment.

An Account of the Life and Writings

erris'd. SOCRATES was far from a Cynic, he par'd their Persons, but lash'd their Manners which were bad. This is all that is said by M. de la Bruyere in the Place which puts M. de Vigneul-Marville into so ill a Humour with him. But 'tis plain that M. de la Bruyere speaks only of Socrates, that what he says of him is true, and very remarkable. What harm is there in this? Oh but, say you, who sees not that 'tis all meant of M. de la Bruyere himself? You see it: And that is as much as to say, that what was heretofore spoken of Socrates is applicable to M. de la Bruyere. If so, why are you thus angry at seeing it? I don't see it, say you again. But 'tis M. de la Bruyere who in this Place would have me see it, with so much Vanity that I cannot bear it. But there's no Relation between Socrates and M. de la Bruyere; why therefore do you say, That M. de la Bruyere meant himself, since he does not name himself? Why do you not rather apply the Comparison to those whom it really suits, Moliere, Boileau, and all such who have given us real Portraits of the Vices and Irregularities of the Age? It is not lawful for a Censor to criticise any thing in a Book but what is contain'd in it, and which is visible to the Reader. Otherwise, there would be no end of Criticisms; and there are no Extravagances, but might be found ev'n in the most judicious Writer.

I won'd not be understood by what I've said, as if M. de la Bruyere was not liable to have the same thing said of him as was heretofore of Socrates. It is doubtless applicable to him, if it be true that he has painted to the Life the Vices of his Age, as well as those great Masters I just now named, and if there are some People who have thought his Characters extravagant and chimerical. M. de Vigneul-Marville tells us, that M. de la Bruyere caus'd this Reproach to be cast on himself by Fools of his

of M. De la BRUYERE.

own Invention, and form'd on-purpose to do it. I don't see that M. de la Bruyere was under any great Necessity to be at the Pains of creating Fools on purpose for this. The real Fools of this Age have doubtless as fruitful an Imagination as those of Socrates's Time. Be that as it will, I know a witty Man who has lately cast the same Reproach on M. de la Bruyere, as the Fools he invented did, if M. de Vigneul-Marville may be believ'd. This Man is M. de Vigneul-Marville himself, who says in Pag. 340. of his *Melanges*; M. de la Bruyere is marvellous, says M. Menage, in biting the Ridicule of Mankind, and in revealing it. He should have said, concealing it. For M. de la Bruyere by too much endeavouring to render Men ridiculous, makes Sphinxes and Chimera's which bear no Resemblance. If M. de la Bruyere had foreseen this Criticism of M. de Vigneul-Marville's, 'tis highly probable he would have sav'd himself the Trouble of creating Fools on purpose to abuse him.

V. Our Censor returns to the Onset. * In another Place, says he, M. de la Bruyere appears in a less austere and more agreeable Character: Not that of an uneasy Socrates, or a Misanthrope who hates all Mankind; but in the Character of an affable Philosopher. "O thou important Man, and loaded with Affairs," cries he, who in thy Turn standest in Need of my Assistance! Come, and welcome, to the innermost Recesses of my Cloister; the Philosopher is accessible; I will not put you off till To-morrow. You will find me turning over Plato on the Immortality of the Soul, or

* Page 327. &c.

† Chap. VI. Of the Goods of Fortune.

An Account of the Life and Writings

“ with Pen in Hand, calculating the Distance of
“ Saturn and Jupiter, admiring the Works of the
“ Creator, and endeavouring, by acquiring a
“ perfect Knowledge of the Truth, to rectify my
“ Mind and become better. Enter then, all my
“ Doors are open; my Antichamber is not made
“ to tire you in waiting for me; come forward
“ till you find me, without the Ceremony of gi-
“ ving me Notice: You bring me something more
“ precious than Silver or Gold, if 'tis an Oppor-
“ tunity to oblige you, &c.

Nothing can equal the Beauty of that Character, adds M. de Vigneul-Marville. Why then does he endeavour to disfigure it, by breaking his nauseous Jest upon M. de la Bruyere's ordinary Lodging? But then it must be granted, says this judicious Critic, that without supposing either an Antichamber or Closet, a Man might very easily have introduc'd himself to M. de la Bruyere, before he had an Apartment in the Hotel de There was but one Door to open, and but one Chamber next the Sky, divided in two by a slight Hanging. What's all this to the Purpose? Because M. de la Bruyere was but indifferently lodg'd, was he less commendable for being Civil, Affable, Complaisant, and Officious? What wou'd M. de Vigneul-Marville have said against Socrates, who had much more Reason to complain of Fortune than M. de la Bruyere: Wou'd he have laugh'd at his Moderation, Humanity, Affability, Complaisance, . . . under pretence that not having wherewithal to set up for a Man of Figure in Athens, 'twas no wonder he apply'd himself to get a Name by Methods suitable to his Condition? But M. de Vigneul-Marville is deceiv'd if he thinks that so soon as a Man of Learning begins to be ill at ease in the World, he becomes more supple, more civil, more obliging, and more affable; for we every Day meet
with

of M. De la BRUYERE.

with Men of Learning more uncivil, haughty, rough, and untractable, than the most snappish Man of Business. *There are some good Qualities which are never perfect when they are acquir'd*, as the Duke de la Rochefoucault has observed. Of this Number is Kind-heartedness, Gentleness and Complaisance. This Character which M. de la Bruyere gives his Philosopher under his Name, or rather by making him speak himself, is not a whit more his Character, than it ought to be that of every Man of Sense, who has a well-turn'd generous Soul. Now He is the true Philosopher, who, desiring to live socially in the World, finds no Difficulty in comprehending, that the best Thing he can do, is to endeavour to gain the Friendship of Men by all manner of good Offices. His Advances are not lost. He soon reaps the Fruit thereof with Interest. Which shews, by the way, that *instead of being frighten'd, or ev'n blushing at the Name of Philosopher, there's no Man in the World who ought not to have a very strong Tincture of Philosophy*. For, as M. de la Bruyere says, (from whom I borrow this Reflection) *Philosophy besits all the World: The Practice of it is useful to all Ages, all Sexes, and all Conditions*.

VI. This Fault committed here by M. de Vigneul-Marville, voluntarily or thro' Ignorance, of taking Historically and Literally what M. de la Bruyere meant of every ~~Medious~~ Man who takes care to cultivate his Reason, gives him a fresh Occasion of declaiming upon what M. de la Bruyere says elsewhere, under the Person of *Antisthenes*, to represent the lamentable Condition of many famous Authors, who, as Boileau says,

Are not a bit the Plumper for their Fame.

An Account of the Life and Writings

But if *M. de la Bruyere's* Circumstances in the World were none of the easiest, as *M. de Vigneul-Marville* assures us, he is the more to be valu'd for having found Means to cultivate his Mind, and to work his Understanding to that Degree of Perfection which he did, in Spite of those Distractions and Chagrins which are occasion'd by the indispensable Necessity of providing for the ordinary Calls of Life. 'Twas no other than what has happen'd to many celebrated Writers, who, to the Shame of their Age (of which they were the Ornament) have liv'd in an extreme Misery.

M. de Vigneul-Marville himself gives us a pretty long List of those indigent Scholars; and instead of sporting with their Misfortune, he seems touch'd with it, as appears from what he tells us of *M. du Ryer*. Why has he not the same Humanity for *M. de la Bruyere*? This Critic seems to insult him thus, merely to have an Occasion to tell us, that he was a forc'd Author. I know not what *M. de Vigneul-Marville* means by a *Forc'd Author*. But for my Part, I should think those Writers may be call'd so who compose nothing themselves, those Compilers of Trumpery, little Tales, and thread-bare Jests, and which any other has as much Right to transcribe as they; Authors made in haste, who say nothing but what might have been said better, whose Style, full of Blunders and paulty proverbial Phrases, has nothing in it that's exact, polite, lively and engaging; in a word, who are always ready to publish New Books with nothing New in them. I need not tell the Reader I mean those Books which terminate in *Ana*, or which without being so terminated are perfectly like them. I know not whether such Gentlemen who for some time have delug'd the Booksellers Shops with these Sort of Performances, are all *Forc'd Authors*, as *M.*

of M: De la BRUYERE.

Le Vigneul-Marville phrases it¹; but one Thing I'm very sure of, that nothing but extreme Want can excuse them, from thus prostituting their Reputation by such boyish Compilations. If the publishing a dull Book is pardonable in any, 'tis only in those Wretches who write for Bread, says *Moliere* in his *Misanthrope*.

And ev'n this is no very good Excuse, if we may believe *Father Tarteron*, who in his Preface to *Perfius* and *Juvenal* says pleasantly, That in Point of Printing, a Man should never be press'd to it, for all the Reasons in the World; no, not for the saving of his Life. Because the Public has with Indulgence receiv'd some * Sayings, which dropp'd from certain great Men in Conversation, and which have been publish'd after their Deaths; Now, forsooth, no Author can † die but there is presently printed a Collection of the fine Things he had been heard to speak during his Life: And some even take the Pains to makethese Sort of Collections || in their own proper and private Names, for fear no body should think of performing this Devoir to them after their Deaths, 'Tis wisely done of them: For else Who would have thought of putting to their Account so many beautiful Sentences of *Socrates*, *Aristippus*, *Protagoras*, *Antisthenes*, — with which they fill those Collections, but which might have been seen long before in *Diogenes Laertius*, in *Plutarch*, or to be sure in the *Polyanthea*? Others, more cunning, change the Title. They know that nothing more easily imposes on the Public

* Scaligeriana, Thiana, Perroniana, &c.

† Menagiana, Valefiana, Fureteriana, Surberiana, Arlequiniana, &c.

|| Chevreana.

An Account of the Life and Writings

than a specious Title; and that a Book which lay mouldring in the Shops, has sold to Admiration under a new Name. And therefore seeing that the Public begins to nauseate Books that end in *Ana*, they take care to avoid that Termination in the Titles which they give to their Productions. But all this does not lessen their *Ana*-ship; that is, they are precipitate Compositions, full of uncertain Facts, idle Stories, Decisions ill grounded, or utterly destitute of Proof, and flat Jest, or such as one has met with a hundred Times elsewhere. Such Authors as these may justly be call'd *Forc'd Authors*, but not such who have the genuine penetrating Wit of *M. de la Bruyere*, and who write with so much Exactness, Vivacity, and Delicacy, as that Excellent Man does. Now if among this Sort of Compilers there are some who are not *forc'd* through Necessity to publish such kind of Collections made in haste, without Choice or Discretion, they are but the more blameable for that; and when they were preparing them for the Press, they should have been told what the *Misanthrope* says to *Orontes*, in *Moliere*, *Be rul'd by me, resist the Temptation; Let the Public be depriv'd of these Amusements: And whatever Sollicitations you may have, do not quit the Name you bear at Court, of a worthy Gentleman, in order to be dubb'd, by a covetous Printer, with that of a ridiculous wretched Author.*

But I must return to *M. de Vigneul-Mareville*, for fear he shou'd think himself neglected.

VII. After having said, tho' God knows upon what Grounds, that *M. de la Bruyere* was a *Forc'd Author*, he tells us, that at length his Merit, illustrated by his Sufferings, has shone out to the World. Men have open'd their Eyes, adds he; Virtue has been own'd to be
Virtue,

Virtue, and M. de la Bruyere changing his Fortune, has likewise chang'd his Character. He is no longer a timorous Author, humbling himself in his low Condition; He's above the World, and, approaching to the Sun, despises those who despis'd him, and discovers their Shame by this Narration. * "The World mutinys against

" a Man that begins to grow in Repute; those he
 " esteems his Friends hardly pardon a growing
 " Merit, or the first Report that seems to give him
 " a Share of the Glory they possess; they hold out
 " to Extremity, till the Prince has declar'd him-
 " self by Recompences: Then they immediately
 " congratulate him, and from that Day he takes
 " Place as a Man of Merit". That is to say in plain
 Words, continues our Censurer, that the Academy
 was forc'd to admit M. de la Bruyere, and consented to
 it, because the Time foretold by M. Pellisson was come,
 viz. That the Academy, through an unaccountable Policy,
 forbearing to make Advances and to go out and meet
 Great Men in order to introduce them into their Society,
 wou'd suffer themselves to be sway'd by Interest and Bribes,
 and wou'd in Spite of themselves, grant That to Favour,
 which it refus'd to grant, out of Choice, to Capacity and
 Merit. † An admirable way of Arguing, this!
 " Ah, M. de Vigneul-Marville, you're a desperate
 " Fencer at Criticism! How I pity poor M. de la
 " Bruyere for having You to his Enemy!" Give
 me leave, Sir, to speak to you in the Words of
 Elisa to Clirone in the Critique de l'Ecole des femmes;
 for you admirably well act the Part of that cele-
 brated Precieuse: || You, like her, have a Penetration,

* M. de la Bruyere's own Words. Chap. XII. Of Judgment.

† These Words are taken out of la Critique de l'Ecole des Femmes, and apply'd to the present Subject.

|| Scene II.

which others have not ; You are offended with the Shadow of Things, and can give a criminal Meaning to the most innocent Expressions. Forgive the Application. But barring Raillery, how comes this dangerous Critic to poison us with such Innocent Words as those which he quotes out of M. de la Bruyere's Book ? Who reveal'd to him that those Words must be understood of M. de la Bruyere, more than of any other Person who begins to grow in Repute in the World ? Did M. de la Bruyere tell it him as a Secret ? But how shou'd he do it, since in his Speech to the Academy he declares expressly, and without Equivocation, that he made use of no Mediation to be admitted into that Body ? *Your Voices alone*, says he to those Gentlemen, *your Voices ever free and arbitrary, afford a Place in the French Academy* : You have granted it me, Gentlemen, and with so good a Grace, so unanimous a Consent, that I owe and will hold it by the sole Tenure of your good Pleasure : It was neither high Station, nor Credit, nor Riches, nor Authority, nor Favour, that cou'd Influence you. I am without all these Things. I want every Thing. A Book which for its Singularity met with some Success, and the false and malicious Applications whereof might have done me a Prejudice in the Minds of Persons less equitable and penetrating than your selves, was all the Mediation which I made use of, and which you accepted. Can any Man believe that M. de la Bruyere wou'd have spoken in this manner, if he had been admitted into the Academy at the Recommendation of his Friend ? Wou'd it not have been an unpardonable Boldness and Ingratitude ? If M. de Vigneul-Marville had read M. de la Bruyere's Speech, 'tis likely he wou'd not have pronounc'd so confidently, that he ow'd his Reception into the Academy, to the King's Favour. But I mistake, he had read it, and saw that M. de la Bruyere declares plainly, *That he employ'd no Mediation*

ation to be admitted into the French Academy, but only the Singularity of his Book. These are M. de Vigneul-Marville's own Words, pag. 348. of his *Mélanges d'Histoire & de Littérature*. But this terrible Cenſor does not yield for ſo ſmall a Matter. As M. de la Bruyere, adds he, ſays the contrary in his *CHARACTERS*, and owns it was thro' the King's Favour, who declaring himſelf for him, made others do the like; I hold to that Expression, which being the firſt that came into his Head, ought, according to the Rules, to be the beſt. I believe it would puzzle M. de Vigneul-Marville to prove that the Paſſage in the *CHARACTERS*, where he ſaw thoſe Words, was not printed till after M. de la Bruyere was admitted into the French Academy. "Every Body riſes againſt a Man that begins to grow in Repute: Thoſe he eſteems his Friends, hardly pardon a growing Merit: They hold out to Extremity till the Prince has declar'd himſelf by Recompenſes". That is to ſay, without a Figure, if we will believe M. de Vigneul-Marville, till the Academy was forc'd to receive M. de la Bruyere. What a Fall is here! Good God, what an Explication! Wou'd not one ſay, that a Place in the Academy was as good as a Government of a Province? He does well to ſay without a Figure: For otherwiſe, who wou'd ever have taken it into his Head, that the Word *Recompence* meant a Place in the French Academy? But for whom does this ſevere Critic take us? Does he think himſelf the only Man who has read the *Hiſtory of the Academy*, whereby every body may ſee, That the Advantages, granted to the Members of that illuſtrious Society, are only to be exempted from Watch and Ward, Guardianships, Executorſhips, and to enjoy the Benefit of appointing Commiſſaries to follow any Law-Suit they may have depending in the Provinces remote from Paris? Theſe are ſuch insignificant Things that

that M. Pellisson is amazed they did not ask, besides these Privileges, an Exemption from Taxes, which in all Probability they might have obtain'd without Difficulty. But suppose the Place of an Academic were one of the most considerable in the Kingdom; where is M. de la Bruyere mention'd in the Passage quoted by M. de Vigneul-Marville? What is there there that can be apply'd to him more than to any other Man of Merit whom the King thinks fit to raise to some important Post? Is there no Man in France but M. de la Bruyere, whose shining Qualities have expos'd them to Envy, so soon as they have begun to break out to the World? If so, our Age is a great deal more reasonable than the preceding ones, which furnish us with so many Examples of an ill-natur'd Jealousy.

I have a little too much enlarg'd upon this Article: For, only proposing the Grounds of M. de Vigneul-Marville's Criticism, had been enough to demonstrate the Weakness of it. But I was desirous to shew by this Example, into what Inconveniencies these passionate Censurers run themselves, who, at any rate, are for crying down such Persons or Writings as have not the good Fortune to please them. Blinded by this Prejudice, they take every thing by the wrong Handle, Censure at random the most innocent Expressions, boldly condemn the best Places of a Work without giving themselves the Trouble to understand them, and thereby expose themselves to the Censure of all the World.

* Ceci s'adresse à vous, &c.

* Fables choisies de M. de la Fontaine, Lib. V. Fab. XVI.

" This

“ This is address’d to You, Spirits of the last
 “ Order, who, being good for nothing your selves,
 “ make it your principal Business to Bite others.
 “ You torment yourselves to no manner of pur-
 “ pose. Do you think that your Teeth leave any
 “ Marks of their Rage upon so many excellent
 “ Works? No, No; They are, to You, Brass,
 “ Steel, Diamond.

VIII. What our Censurer adds as a finishing
 Stroke to the pretended Character of M. de la
 Bruyere, cannot have more Solidity than what we
 have already confuted, since ’tis built on the same
 Foundation. *No Philosopher, says he, was ever more*
humble in Appearance, nor more haughty in Reality than
M. de la Bruyere. He gets astride his Great Horse;
and in proportion as he rises, he speaks with the greater
Boldness and Confidence. “ People may refuse to give
 “ my Writings their just Recompence; but can-
 “ not lessen their Reputation: Or if they shou’d,
 “ What will hinder me from despising it? As M.
 de Vigneul-Marville quotes these Words, they can’t
 be apply’d to any but M. de la Bruyere. But, as I
 said before, Who has reveal’d to this sharp-sighted
 Critic, that M. de la Bruyere meant himself, and not
 as well any other Philosopher, who, lashing the Vi-
 ces of Mankind in order to their Amendment, has
 a Right to despise those that make it their Study to
 run down his Works? A Man need only read the
 whole Passage to be convinc’d that it ought to be
 understood in this latter Sense. ’Tis somewhat too
 long to be transcrib’d here. You will find it in the
 12th Chap. Of JUDGMENT. But if our
 Censurer will at any Rate have these Words be ap-
 plicable to M. de la Bruyere himself, I don’t see that
 they contain any thing very extravagant, if they
 be taken in their true genuine Sense. It is manifest,

by those Persons who go about to lessen the Reputation of a Book, we are to understand those envious People, who only act so out of mere Spite, as appears from the wretched Arguments they make use of to compass their Ends. Now what better Course can a Man take in this Case, than to condemn their vain Insults? And consequently, if M. de la Bruyere was ever expos'd to the Hatred of such Men, why might he not say, "You cannot lessen the Reputation of my Writings by your flat Writicisms, or by the wrong and malicious Applications you make of my Words? But if you shou'd for a while impose on the Public by your Calumnies and odious ill-grounded Reflexions, *Who shall bind me from despising you?* You expect perhaps that I shou'd give my self the Trouble to Answer you. But you're mistaken. That wou'd be giving a Weight to your empty Reasonings. I rather chuse to look on 'em with Contempt, as they deserve." Allowing that M. de la Bruyere had express'd himself in this manner, or that what he does say is capable of such a Meaning, yet how does he deserve Censure? Is it not certain, that upon many Occasions 'tis a laudable Pride not to value the ineffectual Nibblings of Envy? This was the Conduct observ'd by M. Boileau: And yet who blames that Great Man for chusing rather to enrich the Public with New Pieces, than to waste his Time in refuting all those impertinent Criticisms which were at first made on the Works he publish'd? And who does not wish that the famous M. Arnaud had employ'd himself to better Purpose than in arguing with his Adversaries, in which he spent the best Part of his Life?

But to return to M. Vigneul-Marville: May we not truly say, that, if M. de la Bruyere had seen this odious Portrait which that dangerous Critic has made of his Person without any Appearance of Reason, he wou'd have made no other Reply than that, * *Those who without knowing us, think evil of us, do Us no harm: 'Tis not Us they attack, 'tis the Phantom of their own Imagination?* For, as I have shewn, there is nothing in all this pretended Picture that is copy'd after Nature: The whole Piece being drawn at Random, and without any Resemblance of the Original, which the Painter intended to represent.

But enough of the Person of M. de la Bruyere: Now let us see what our Critic finds amiss in his Writings.

* M. de la Bruyere's own Words, Ch. 12.

C H A P. II.

*Of M. de la Bruyere's Book, entitul'd,
The CHARACTERS: Or the
Manners of the Present Age.*

I. **I**F Averring were Proving, never was Book better criticiz'd than that of *M. de la Bruyere* has been by *M. de Vigneul-Marville*. But since every Man who sets up for a Critic, becomes a Party in the Cause, his Evidence goes for nothing before the Tribunal of the Public. After such a Man has declar'd that such or such an Author displeases him, 'tis no longer necessary that he shou'd tell us in different Places and in different Manners, that he condemns his Thoughts, Style or Expressions. We know it already. All that is expected from him is, to demonstrate clearly and solidly that such or such a Passage of the Book he pretends to animadvert upon, is worthy of Condemnation.

I know very well that several learned Men have contracted a Habit of Retailing their own private Opinions without supporting them by any Proof. But that was not the Way they got their Reputation by. On the contrary, 'twas a Fault they were always blam'd for by all Men of Sense in the Republic of Literature. 'Tis likewise true, that many learned Men, who at this day write in *Latin*, are pretty forward to excuse this Method, because they not unwillingly imitate it: But Men of sound Sense can't away with it: And particularly these

Magi-

Magisterial Arts are not to be born in Workswritten in the Vulgar Tongue. An Example of this has been seen in France in M. Dacier's Translation of *Horace*. That Critic being willing to recommend his Author and the Notes with which (as Father *Tarteron* says pleasantly) he has *block'd* him up, is eternally putting us in Mind that this is admirable, incomparable, inimitable . . . and that such a Passage is to be read thus, that no Body ever rightly explain'd That other Passage, that 'tis capable of no other Sense, that it must be understood so and so, let all the Commentators, Ancient or Modern, say what they please, . . . &c. But by these Master-like Decisions, that learned Critic has expos'd himself to the Raillery of all the World: For, as Father *Tarteron* very well observes, *nothing disoblige or shocks a Reader more than that Positive, Absolute, and oftentimes Groundless Air of Authority, which is seen to tyrannize in certain Books.*

And indeed such a Criticism, void of Proofs, is of no manner of use. What signifies it for me to know that such a Thought or such a Work displeases you, if I'm ignorant of the Reasons for which you condemn it? For instance, I have been lately reading the *Voyage to the World of Descartes*, compos'd by Father *Daniel*; and was charm'd with the Simplicity of his Style, Purity of his Expression, and more especially the Solidity of his Arguments. But M. de *Vigneul-Marville* thinks fit to publish in Print that * the Author of that Book is an insipid Buffoon. Am I oblig'd, upon sight of this airy Decision, to surrender up my own Judgment, and embrace the Opinion of M. de *Vigneul-Marville*? I don't believe he himself will presume to exact any such thing of.

me. But if he did not think to ~~intrude~~ ^{mislead} some-body by this Criticism, why did he make it? Why throw away his Time? The Author of the *Dialogues of the Dead* says wittily, *That as lazy as he is, he wou'd engage, were he well paid for't, to criticise all the Books that are written.* Tho' it seems to be a pretty extensive Employment, adds he, *I'm certain I shou'd have Time enough to be idle.* But that Judicious Author wou'd have liked the Employment much better, if he had bethought himself of this other Method of Criticising, wherein a Man supposes what he pleases without troubling himself to prove it: A Method so short and easy, that, in following it, the best Books may be answer'd without taking the Pains so much as to read them. 'Tis true, such a Criticism is liable to this small Inconvenience; that as it is easily made, so 'tis easily destroy'd. For there's no body but has a Right to his at all such naked, unsupported Decisions, and to oppose to them others directly contrary: So that by Criticising in this manner, a Man is no forwarder at the Upshot than the Marquis in the Play call'd the *Critick of the School of Women*; who being resolv'd to run down that Piece, fancy'd he did Wonders by saying in the Tone of a Master, *He thought it execrable, to the last Degree execrable, what they call Execrable.* But he was soon giv'n to understand, that this Decision of his tended to just nothing at all, by being answer'd, *And I, dear Marquis, think Your Judgment reasonable.* Every positive Censurer, who expects to be believ'd upon an *ipse dixi*, ought to be answer'd in the same manner: For if he takes the liberty to reject the Sentiment of another, without giving any Reason, every Man has a Right to reject his with the same Freedom.

If M. de Vigneul-Marville had thought of this, he had apply'd himself more than he has done, to prove particularly and rationally, that M. de la Bruyere's BOOK is full of false Thoughts, obscurely and ill express'd, instead of telling us in general, that, if M. de la Bruyere had chosen a good Style, written with Purity, and made his Portraits more perfect, no Man cou'd have disesteem'd his Book without Injustice; that, he uses forc'd Transpositions; that, he has no regular Style; that, he writes at Random, employing far-fetch'd Expressions for very common Things; and that, when he means to speak of more exalted Matters, he weakens them by vulgar Expressions, and makes the strong and the weak growel alike; that, he incessantly aims at a Sublime, which he does not understand, and which he sometimes places in Things, sometimes in Words, without ever catching that Point of Unity, which reconciles Words with Things, in which consists the whole Secret and Finesse of this marvellous Art. But to what Purpose serve all these loose wild Assertions, if they are not substantially prov'd by incontestable Examples? I much esteem all the good Things which M. de la Bruyere has drawn from our good Authors, continues our Critic, with the same Air of a Master, who expects to be believ'd on his Word; but I don't esteem the Manner of his introducing them. I rather wish he had giv'n them to us just as he found them, instead of darkening them as he does, with his Fargon. I commend the good Intention he had to reform the Manners of the Present Age, by discovering its weak Sides; but I can by no means approve his seeking these weak Sides in his own Imagination, rather than in the Manners themselves; and that by straining every Thing he represents, he shou'd draw Pictures from his own Head, and not after the Life, as the Subject requires. I don't despise the Rules for well-writing, which M. de la Bruyere produces in his Characters; but then I can't endure to see him

violate those Rules which are founded on Good Sense, to follow the Irregularities of a Capricious Genius. To conclude, I praise the Design of M. de la Bruyere: It is a bold one, a very bold one, and such as the Public might have receiv'd some Benefit from; but I do not stick to say, that this Design is not executed in a Masterly Manner, and that the Undertaker is not, by far, equal to the Greatness of the Enterprize. A dreadful Charge! but what do we learn from all this? No earthly Thing but that M. de Vigneul-Marville does not approve of M. de la Bruyere's Book; so that all who esteem'd this Book before they read this Criticism, may say to him, *This then is the Judgment You make of the CHARACTERS OF THE AGE; Very well; Now, Sir, we, on the other Hand, think Your Judgment utterly ridiculous and groundless.* We should not, 'tis true, be e'er the wiser for this Counter-Criticism neither, but M. de Vigneul-Marville wou'd have no just Cause to complain of it. For he has no more Reason to contradict these Gentlemen, than they have to slight his Criticism, which is not warranted by any Authority but his own. This is what M. de Vigneul-Marville ought to have guarded against, especially since in most of the Things which he says against the *Characters of the Age*, he enters into Dispute with M. Menage. For if he had Reason not to yield to the Authority of that Learned Man, ought not he to have suppos'd, that they who shou'd read his Criticism, wou'd no more value his Authority, than he does that of the *Menagiana*? And this, the way, shews very plainly the Usefulness of those naked Decisions, which People take upon them to crowd into those Books which end in *Ana* and other Works form'd on the same Model.

* These general Reflections might almost suffice to destroy what M. Vigneul-Marville has thought fit to publish against M. de la Bruyere's Book; for most

of his Remarks are either grounded upon his own bare Authority, which in this Case ought not to be reckon'd as any thing; or else upon the Supposition he makes *grati* and without Proof, that the Book he pretends to criticize is a Senseless Book. This is what we are now going to see, Article by Article. But as it is of small Concern to the Public, to know that a Book can be refuted, unless this Refutation instructs them in something, I shall endeavour to demonstrate by Reason, the contrary of what M. *Vigneul-Marville* has barely advanc'd without Proof.

II. M. *de la Bruyere* concludes his Book with these Words: *If these Characters don't take, I shall wonder at it: And if they do take, I shall wonder at that too.* The Variety and Uncertainty of Men's Judgment is so great, that M. *de la Bruyere* might very well speak thus of a Work, wherein he had endeavour'd to give a genuine Representation of the Manners of his Age. For, believing on the one Hand, that he had faithfully executed his Design, (otherwise he ought not to have publish'd his Book) he might well wonder at the Miscarriage of a Book, which contain'd nothing but Truths, almost as obvious to every body as to himself; and on the other Hand, considering the Fantasticalness and extreme Difference of Human Judgments, he cou'd not but be surpriz'd, if those Truths shou'd happen to be relish'd by the Generality of Readers. This I take to be the true Meaning of that Sentence which M. *de Vigneul-Marville* will have to be ambiguous. Be it so, or no, 'tis with this he begins the Censure he thought fit to pass upon M. *de la Bruyere's* Book. *If these Characters don't take, says M. de la Bruyere, I shall wonder at it: And if they do take, I shall*

shall wonder at that too. For my Part, * says M. de Vigneul-Marville, I shall wonder at it too. As much as to say, He does not much approve of those Characters. With all my Heart. But if he was resolv'd to let the Public know this, he ought, at the same time, to have discover'd to them his Reasons for it, supposing modestly that the Public are not very solicitous to be inform'd about his Dis-
tastes; and this is what he has not done, as I think, and hope to demonstrate in the remaining Part of these few Sheets. I however frankly confess, adds M. de Vigneul-Marville, that M. de la Bruyere's Book is of a Nature to incite the reading it. In all Ages They who have writen against the Manners of their Age, have met with Readers in great Numbers, and favourable Readers too, because of the Inclination most People have for Satire, and the Pleasure they feel in seeing their Neighbours Defects laid open, while their own are conceal'd, ev'n from themselves. Tho' Barclay's Euphormio touches the Vices of the Courts of Europe, only in general, and but slightly, yet his Book has been greedily read, and is so to this Day. The same may be said of the Giges, the Genius Sæculi, and other the like Books. No wonder then if M. de la Bruyere's Characters have had such a Run, and bore Nine Editions, since, entering into a Detail of the Vices of the present Age, he characterises All both of Court and City, who are tainted with any of those Vices. The most malicious Curiosity catches at it, as it does at all those Libels and Writings which suppose Keys for the understanding them. The City has a strange itching to be inform'd of the Vices of the Court: The Courtiers on their Side love to cast their Eyes down on the Vices of the Citizens, to make them-

selves merry with them; and the Countrey is inconceivably greedy to hear the scandalous News of both Court and City.

So then 'tis solely to the Inclination most Men have for Satire, that M. de la Bruyere's Book is beholden for that general Approbation it has met with in France, where it has been printed *no less than Nine Times*, and will doubtless be still printed-on for the same Reason. From this blessed way of arguing, it wou'd follow, that the Satires of *Horace, Persius, Juvenal, Regnier, Boileau, &c.* neither were nor are esteem'd upon any other Account, than for the Pleasure most Men take in entertaining themselves with the Vices of Others. But with M. de Vigneul-Marville's good leave, the Case is not so. Men admire those Authors, because they are full of Wit, and the several Portraits they draw of Human Errors, exact, their Raillery fine, solid, and agreeably exprest. . . . And whenever they fall upon praising what is Praise-worthy, as they very often do, the Reader is as much affected by those Elogiums, as with the Satirical Strokes with which their Works are interspers'd.

Because we every Day hear, from the Pulpit, general Maxims upon most Subjects, therefore some Writers form themselves upon the same Method of Reasoning, which teaches nothing. For commonly speaking, if those general Maxims be taken rigorously and in the full Extent of the Terms made use of to express them, they are false: And if they are consider'd in a loose indefinite Sense, they are of no Use, and say no more than what every body knows already. This is easily seen in the Point before us. 'Tis certain Men have Malice; every body agrees it. But can it
from

41 *An Account of the Life and Writings*

from thence be concluded, that this Malice governs all their Judgments? No. If Men have Spitefulness, they have likewise good Sense. If they laugh at the Picture of a Fool, a Miser, a Coward, a Coxcomb, . . . 'tis not always because they love to be diverted at another's Expence, but because there is represented to them an Idea of those different Characters in lively and natural Colours, which never fails to please. A Proof of this is, that these Portraits divert them, tho' they have no Thoughts of applying them to any Original actually existing. For this Reason 'tis, Men love Comedy, wherein are seen Human Weaknesses turn'd agreeably into Ridicule, without thinking on any Person in the World, in whom they have observ'd the least Likeness. For Instance, when the Pit is diverted with seeing the Play of *Tartuffe*, no Man there sets before his Eyes any one of his Acquaintance, whose Character resembles an Hypocrite: But the Picture of that Rascal pleases them, because all its Features are well drawn, and admirably well suit the Character which the Poet design'd to give him. And this is the Reason why a Miser is sometimes diverted at the Representation of a Miser, of which he himself is the most perfect Original, and from whom oftentimes the Picture was drawn.

† *Each Man is nicely shown in this new Glass,
And smiles to think he is not meant the Ass:
A Miser often laughs the first, to find
A faithful Draught of his own sordid Mind:*

*And Fops are with such Care and Cunning Writ,
They like the Piece for which themselves did sit.*

But supposing that innate Malice helps us to find a Pleasure in these Sort of Shows, and in the reading of Satirical Books, yet this same Malice is not constantly and generally so great, as to blind the Judgment of the Majority of Men, and to make them relish all Sorts of Satire tho' ever so impertinent. If that were so, there had been preserv'd a thousand stupid Libels full of Gall and Venom, which have been written in all Ages against the Greatest Men. Never were so many Satires seen as in the time of the *League*. But what's become of them? They are for ever vanish'd, unless it be the famous *Catholicon* of *Spain*, from whose Value Time has not in the least detracted. Whence arises this Distinction in Favour of that Piece? Is it from the Malice of Men, and their Love of Satire? No; But from the intrinsic Goodness of the Piece, which, as Father *Rapin* says, surpasses every Thing that has been written in that Kind these last Ages. There is seen throughout that Work, adds that Learned Jesuit, a certain Delicacy of Wit, which shines through the rude and gross Customs of that Time: And the little Verses of that Work are of a very fine and natural Character. This, I say, is what has preserv'd that Satire, and which made it so much esteem'd the very Moment 'twas publish'd: For, as M. de *Montmarville* says in his very curious † Observations on that Piece, the Moment 'twas publish'd, every Body was charm'd with it.

But without running so far back, how many Satirical Libels were publish'd in France against Cardinal Mazarin? Nothing was then seen throughout the Town, says the † History of those Times, but Defamatory Libels, Ballads, Satirical Verses, feign'd Stories, State Discourses and political Debates, wherein Mazarin was represented in the most odious manner, and the Royal Family it self not much favour'd. Here was Matter enough for the Malignity of Men: And yet of it self it was not sufficient to give a Value to those Libels, or prevent their falling into Oblivion.

It is true, the Malice, the Passion, and the Desire of decrying the Persons who are the Subject of a Satirical Work, may for a time keep up the Vogue of it. But if it is dull and impertinent, the World grows weary of it almost as soon as of fulsom Panegyric. A thousand ridiculous Pamphlets which were produc'd during the * last War, at Paris, London, Vienna, the Hague, Amsterdam, and other Places, are a good Proof of this. Tho' bought up and read with Eagerness for some Months, they were thrown aside in a short time, to make way for others, which being no better than the rest, soon underwent the same Disgrace.

When therefore a Satire is generally esteem'd, 'tis not enough to say, in order to damn it, that this general Esteem proceeds only from the Inclination Men have to make themselves merry with the Failings of others. This way of Arguing can't be admitted, till a Satire, which has had a Currency for some time, comes to sink and be despis'd. Then indeed, after a Man has manifestly prov'd the Faults of it (which must be done) he

† History of the Prince of Condé, p. 325.

* Begun 1688, ended 1697.

may say, that what kept up its Credit so long, notwithstanding its Grossness, was the spiteful Pleasure Men took in diverting themselves at the Cost of those whom it turn'd into Ridicule. And consequently if M. de Vigneul-Marville does not like the *Characters of the Age*, tho' they are generally esteem'd, he cannot (to justify his Dislike) seasonably say, that 'tis no wonder M. de la Bruyere's CHARACTERS have had such a Run, and bore Nine Editions, *since, entering into a Detail of the Vices of the present Age, he characterizes All, both of Court and City, who are tainted with any of those Vices.* For if M. de la Bruyere has well executed his Design, his Work cannot but be valu'd, like Boileau's Satires, and Moliere's Comedies: And if he has executed it otherwise than well, 'tis Matter of Amazement that his Book has been so long and so generally esteem'd. So that if M. de Vigneul-Marville is of Opinion, that M. de la Bruyere has misrepresented the Manners of his Age, he shou'd prove it by Reasons drawn from the Work it self, and not from the Malignity of Men, which of it self is not sufficient to make a witless Satire keep its Ground for any considerable time.

But what plainly discovers, that this Book of *Characters*, does not owe the Approbation it has met with, to the extraordinary Passion which the City has to be acquainted with the Vices of the Court, to the Pleasure which the Court takes in entertaining it self with the Failings of the City, nor to the inconceivable Greediness the Countrey has to be inform'd of the scandalous News of Either; is, that the first Editions of M. de la Bruyere's Book went presently off, tho' it then contain'd very few of those Characters which cou'd possibly be apply'd to particular Persons.

Beside, the Book is no less admir'd in foreign Countries than it is in *France*. It has perhaps been oftner printed at *Brussels* than *Paris*. *Holland* vends vast Numbers of them; and in *England* it is so universally liked, that I am inform'd there has been Six Editions ev'n of its Translation. Have these People too a *strange Itching*, as *M. de Vigneul-Marville* calls it, to be acquainted with the Vices of all those of the *French Nation* who make any Figure at *Paris* or *Versailles*? But how shou'd they come by that Curiosity towards Persons whose very Names they are ignorant of? And how are they able to pick them out in the CHARACTERS OF THE AGE, wherein not only those pretend-ed Persons are not nam'd, but the Characters which are giv'n them contain nothing but what those Foreigners may as well apply to a thousand other People, as to those whom some Folks fancy the Author had in his Eye? An *Englishman*, for Example, opens *M. de la Bruyere's* Book, and there meets with this Character: * *Argira pulls off her Glove to shew her white Hand; remembers very punctually to talk of her little Shoe, that she may be suppos'd to have a little Foot; she laughs at things pleasant or serious to shew her fine Set of Teeth: If she discovers her Ears, 'tis because they're well made; and if she does not dance, 'tis because she is not well satisfy'd with her Shape, which is somewhat too Square; She knows perfectly well what is for her Interest, one thing only excepted, she is always talking, and wants Wit.* Must this *Englishman* needs apply himself to *M. de Vigneul-Marville*, (for he it seems, is the only Person fit to be consulted in this Case) to be inform'd what Person either of the Court or City *M. de la Bruyere* design'd to re-

present under the Name of *Argyra*? This is not necessary. He has no more to do, than to cast his Eyes round him, and he will find Persons enough whom that Character fits. Which is sufficient to make him sensible that M. de la Bruyere has well describ'd in this Place the Weakness and Blindness of most People, who neglecting to look into their greatest Defects, are very quick-sighted to their least good Qualities.

Besides, by M. de Vigneul-Marville's manner of Speaking of M. de la Bruyere's Book, one wou'd swear he never read it. For by maintaining, as he does, that the great Success it meets with from the Public, proceeds merely from an ill-natur'd Pleasure which Men take in seeing their Neighbour's Faults laid open; he seems to suppose it to be nothing but a Heap of Satyrical Portraits of the whole Town, as he expresses it. And yet nothing is less true than such a Supposition. For the Book does not only, almost throughout, consist of solid Reflexions, which solely respect the Virtues or Vices of Men, without any reference to any Person whatever, as will appear to every Man that will give himself the trouble to read it: But likewise most of the Draughts therein contain'd, can no more be apply'd to certain particular Persons, than to a Thousand others whom M. de la Bruyere never saw: And some others (not a few) contain the Elogium of Persons the most distinguish'd for Virtue or Merit, that have appear'd in France towards the end of the XVIIth Century: Characters much more proper to excite the Envy of Men, than to awaken that ill-natur'd Curiosity, which, according to M. de Vigneul-Marville, makes them find so great a Pleasure in seeing their Neighbour's Failings detected, while their own are hid, even from themselves; that it gives them a Relish for very flat and senseless Satires, such as the Characters of the Age.

E

But

But since we are fall'n upon the Article of the Portraits which M. de la Bruyere has interspers'd in his Book, we shall transport hither all that our Critic says of them elsewhere, that we may make the better Judgment thereof by seeing it all together.

III. M. de Vigneul-Marville begins to speak of the Portraits which are spread throughout M. de la Bruyere's Book, by attacking with the utmost Intrepidity the advantageous Judgment which was made of them by M. Menage in the Collection of Thoughts ascrib'd to him after his Death, under the Title of *Menagiana*. "M. de la Bruyere is wonderful, says M. Menage, in hitting the Ridicule of Men, and in revealing it." He shou'd rather have said concealing it, adds M. de Vigneul-Marville; for M. de la Bruyere, by over-straining himself to render Men ridiculous, makes Chimera's and Sphinxes, which have no resemblance. M. Menage, as fond as he is of his M. de la Bruyere, is forc'd to own that his Portraits are somewhat loaded. He is mealy-mouth'd, and dares not say, as he truly might, that his Portraits are too much loaded, and so unnatural, that most of them are without Originals to match with them. When a Man paints from his Fancy, he may load his Draughts, and give a loose to his Imagination: But when he draws from the Life, he shou'd copy Nature as she really is. M. de la Bruyere, besides that he works rather in Water-colours than Oyl, and does not understand the different Tones, or the Union of Colours; and, generally speaking, his Pictures are only sketch'd out; has this further Misfortune, not knowing how to Design correctly, he spoils his Figures, and makes Monsters and Grottesco's of them.

A pleasant way of Criticizing this! He first begs the Question, then repeats it a hundred Times and a hundred several Ways, without any Proof; and after-

afterwards falls to Triumphant, as if he had knock'd down his Adversary beyond recovery! The least School-boy might have done as much. *M. de Vigneul-Marville* has a Grudge against the Portraits of *M. de la Bruyere*, and against *M. Menage*, who approves of them. He declares it loudly, he is not mealy-mouth'd: But, in short, all that he says to baffle *M. Menage*, is, that he disagrees with him in Opinion about the Portraits which are found in *M. de la Bruyere's* Book. A pretty Business this, to trouble the Public with! According to *M. Menage*, *M. de la Bruyere* is wonderful in hitting the Blind-side of Men, and in revealing it. Say rather in concealing it, replies *M. de Vigneul-Marville*, gravely. 'Tis true, continues *M. Menage*, *M. de la Bruyere's* Portraits are somewhat loaded; but yet they are natural. Will *M. de Vigneul-Marville* allow this? By no means. Why then, say you, he will endeavour to refute it by sensible Examples or irrefragable Arguments. No such Matter. He will content himself with opposing to *M. Menage* a quite contrary Decision. *M. de la Bruyere's* Portraits, says he, are not only too much loaded, but so unnatural, that most of them are without Originals to match with them. And because some Folks are used to assign the Victory to him who speaks most and last, *M. de Vigneul-Marville*, who is resolv'd to make the Experiment, says over and over in different Words, that *M. de la Bruyere's* Portraits are ill contriv'd, that they are Sketch'd, Murder'd, that they are Monsters and Grotesques; thus cunningly borrowing the Terms of Art which few People understand, the better to blind his Readers, by shewing them that he understands these Matters, and can speak of them knowingly. And indeed, too many are apt to be impos'd upon by those Doctorial Airs. They fancy that one who speaks in such a positive Manner, must have good Reasons for

what he advances. And yet it is no very certain Consequence. For, on the contrary, those who are furnish'd with good Reasons, hasten to lay them down ingeniously without wasting their Time in fruitless Words. But let us for a Moment suppose, that M. de Vigneul-Marville does not condemn M. de la Bruyere's Portraits without a Reason: Why does he not make that appear to others, which he sees so plainly himself? Does he imagine all the World have the same Sentiments he has? That wou'd be having a good Opinion of Mankind. But why then did he squander his Ink and Paper in Publishing to us what he suppos'd was known to every body before he took the pains to write it down in his *Melanges d'Histoire & de Literature*? And if he believ'd (as is most likely) that some People might be blinded in this particular, either through their own Malignity, as he has already told us, or by the Authority of the *Menagiana*, as he will by and by * tell us; Why does he hide from us the good Reasons which he has to condemn M. de la Bruyere's Portraits, and which might serve to disabuse those who admire them? " Oh, you'll say, M. de Vigneul-Marville's Design was to baffle the *Menagiana*; " and his Authority is sufficient for that; it ought " certainly to prevail against a Collection that is " not own'd, which at best is but a Posthumous " Work, and which consequently wants that Ex- " actness of Expression, and that Closeness of Rea- " soning; which, generally speaking, are only to " be met with in such Writings as have been view'd " and review'd, and to which the Author has put " the last Hand." Well, be it so, let the *Melanges*

* M. Menage says he p. 348. of his *Melanges*, has mightily set off M. de la Bruyere's Characters.

d'Histoire & de Literature carry it against the *Ménagiana*.

But did not M. de Vigneul-Marville in his Conscience know, before he wrote his Book, that M. de la Bruyere's Book was approv'd of in *France* and Foreign Countries, that it was printed and reprinted before the Death of M. Menage? Why then does he content himself with telling us gravely, that the Portraits which are found in that Book are not natural, that they are *sketch'd* and *murder'd*, that they are Grotesks and Monsters? Does he think that upon so formal a Determination, all who approv'd of M. de la Bruyere's Book, will renounce their Opinion to embrace his, and rather chuse to take his Word than trust their own Judgment? Or does he give all these Decisions for Proofs? I take him to be a Man of too much Sense to be guilty of such an Error: 'Tis his Business to inform us whether he does so or not. But, in the mean time I'm afraid some People will be apt to suspect he had nothing better to say, and that he has plainly shewn by his Example; that if M. de la Bruyere does not always *Design correctly*, yet he has pretty well Painted those positive Censurers, who believe they are dispens'd with for giving a Reason for what they advance. The Portrait is this: I know not whether it be in *Water-colours* or *Oyl*, M. de Vigneul-Marville shall judge of that himself. To SAY MODESTLY, that such a Thing is good or bad, and (N. B.) to give a Reason why it is so, requires a Man to be a Master of good Sense and Language; 'tis no easy Matter. The shortest way is to declare in a positive Tone, either that it is execrable or wonderful.

And here I shall observe (if I may be permitted to leave M. de la Bruyere's Censurer for a Moment) that nothing is more Sage than the Advice which

An Account of the Life and Writings

a Learned *Roman* gave to the Orators of his Time,
 * *To look out for Things worthy the Attention of Learned
 and Sensible Men, before they cast about for Words and
 Language to dress them in.* 'Tis evident that Authors
 are yet more oblig'd to follow this Advice than
 they who speak in Public; for whereas the latter
 may impose upon People by an agreeable Outside,
 by a charming Voice, handsome Gesture, lively
 and Pathetic Pronunciation, which ravish and en-
 chant the Mind, by incessantly presenting to it
 new Thoughts, which holding it continually in
 Suspence, amuse and bubble the Hearer, without gi-
 ving him time to examine them; the other, on the
 contrary, cannot expect to fix his Reader's Atten-
 tion, but by laying before him such Thoughts as
 are noble, solid, exact, profound, and tending to
 one and the same End. These are not Sounds
 which are lost in Air, and presently forgotten:
 They are Words which remain continually in
 Sight, which are compar'd, examin'd sedately
 and in cool Blood, and whose Coherence or In-
 consistence is easily seen. But as among our popu-
 lar Orators, commonly call'd *Preachers*, there are
 some who wou'd be hard put to't if they were
 not to mount the Pulpit till they had furnish'd
 themselves with Things capable of moving intelli-
 gent and clear-sighted Men, it being customary
 with most of them to palm upon us whatever comes
 uppermost, at random and without any Preparati-
 on; so likewise many a *Book-maker* wou'd be re-
 duced to silence, if he were oblig'd not to take Pen
 in Hand till he had furnish'd himself with Thoughts

* *Volo prius habeat Orator rem de qua dicat, dignam auri-
 bus eruditis, quam cogitet quibus verbis quidq; dicat aut quo-
 modo.* M. Tull. Cic. ad M. Brutum Orator. cap. 34.

fit for the Entertainment of Men of Sense. And whence shou'd they have such rational Thoughts, since they very often venture upon writing on Subjects which they do not understand themselves.

† *Such a one starts up on a sudden, takes Pen, Ink and Paper, and without ever having had a Thought of it before, says to himself, I will write a Book, tho' he has no other Talent for Writing but the Want of Fifty Pistoles.*

*. . . . He will write and get it printed too : And because he must not send blank Paper to the Press, he blots and scribbles a Quire or two with such Stuff as this ; That the River Seine runs through the City of Paris ; That there are Seven Days in the Week ; That it rains, and is bad Weather, or some Things of the like Importance. There are some who hire themselves out to the Booksellers, to work Taskwork upon any Subject whatever, either in Verse or Prose : And 'tis oftentimes the Bookseller himself who furnishes them with a Title, to which they undertake to subjoin with all speed a certain Number of Words, which, when they fill up so many Pages, do at last amount to what they call a Book. Hence it comes we have so many New Books at Paris, wherein are seen nothing but Disorder and Confusion from the Beginning to the End ; lax and indeterminate Thoughts, trivial Reflections, false Reasonings, bold unmain-
tainable Assertions, Facts uncertain, ill express'd, and cram'd with ridiculous Circumstances, &c. But, by what I hear, 'tis not only in France that the Booksellers have Authors in their Pay, but those likewise of England and Holland have them in pretty good Numbers, and no less Fruitful in Literary Trifles. Too sure a Proof of the Decay*

† M. Bruyere's Words, Ch. XV.

of polite Learning in Europe! For in short, such Books spoil the Taste of the Public, by habituating it to dull and insipid Things, as is very well observ'd by M. de la Bruyere in the Sequel of the Passage I just now quoted.

But to return to M. de Vigneul-Marville. He's in the wrong to reflect upon M. de la Bruyere's Portraits without giving any Reason for all the hard things he says of them: But, however, that does not hinder their being true, I confess. Let us therefore see whether they be or no. All that he finds amiss in them is reducible to this, *That they are too much loaded and so unnatural, that the greatest Part of them are without any Original to match with them.*

IV. The greatest Part of these Portraits do not, it is true, hit any body, provided M. Vigneul-Marville means by this, that they do not so agree with any certain Persons as not to be applicable to any other. But they cannot for this Reason be condemn'd, since they were not made to represent certain particular Persons, exclusive of all others. This is what M. de la Bruyere tells us himself, in the Preface he put before his Speech to the Royal Academy. *I did indeed paint after Nature; but I did not always mean to paint Mr. such a one, or Mrs. such a one; I did not hire my self out to the Public to draw nothing but true Portraits, and such as were perfectly like, for fear they shou'd sometimes be known, and not seem feign'd or imaginary: Nay, I was more difficult and went farther; I took one Feature from this Side, and another Feature from that, and from these same Features which might possibly concur in one and the same Person, I drew some Portraits that were natural and probable.*

And consequently, these Portraits not hitting any Person in particular, is so far from being a Fault, 'tis rather one of their greatest Perfections, since

since they only represent what the Painter intended they shou'd. For Example, *M. de la Bruyere* has a mind to present us with the Character of a *Fop*, who minds nothing but Dress, makes it his prime Concern, and thinks he was born for no other Purpose. *Iphis*, says he, sees at Church a new-fashion'd Shoe, he looks upon his own, and blushes, and can no longer believe himself dress'd: He came to Mass only to shew himself, but now he hides himself: He is held by the Foot in his Chamber all the rest of the Day: He has a soft Hand, and maintains it in Italian Paste: He is sure to laugh often, to shew his White Teeth: He sets his Mouth in order, and is in a perpetual Smile: He looks upon his Legs, he views himself in the Glass, and no body can have so good an Opinion of another, as he has of himself: He has acquir'd a delicate clear Voice, and 'tis happy for him that he lisps: He has a turn of his Head, and a sort of Sweetness in his Eyes, which he never forgets to make use of, as Graces to set himself off: His Gate is soft and the prettiest he is able to contrive: He sometimes makes use of a little Red, but 'tis very seldom, he does not make a Custom of it. Nothing is more exact than this Character. There's not a Stroke in all this Satire but carries an Edge. And yet it can't be said with any Appearance of Reason, that this Portrait represents any one Person so as to suit no other. For if it were so, *Iphis* must in his single self have all the Qualities ascrib'd to him by *M. de la Bruyere*, and no other can have them: And consequently this whole Picture must be consider'd as an Enumeration of historical Facts, which wou'd be to the last Degree absurd: For how shou'd *M. de la Bruyere* come to know that *Iphis* saw at Church a new-fashion'd Shoe, that he blush'd at it, and went and hid himself in his Chamber, till his Shoemaker had made him a new Pair like those he saw. . . ? But tho' this *Iphis* did never exist, yet the Portrait

M. de

M. de la Bruyere makes of him is nevertheless natural, because it carries along with it a Verisimilitude, and is very suitable to those Effeminate Men who are so in love with themselves, that they mind nothing but Dress; and there is no Necessity to suppose they resemble this imaginary *Iphis* in every Respect, that they have All white Teeth, little Mouths, handsome Legs, &c.

Besides, whether M. de la Bruyere did or did not think of certain particular Persons when he drew these Portraits, no Man can justly say that he intended to characterize such or such a Person in particular, since he does not draw any private Person in Colours peculiar to him alone, viz. From any notorious Accident of his Life, or something which he did or said at such a Time and in such a Place, and which has been nois'd about in the World. This is what is well prov'd by l'Abbe de Villiers in his admirable *Treatise of Satire*: When, says he, an Author who only proposes to lash Vice in general, makes use of Fictitious Names to represent more sensibly the general Disorders which he attacks, or the better to enliven the Subject he treats of, it ought not to be imputed to him for a Crime, provided he says nothing that describes any one personally. This Conduct was observ'd by several of the Ancient Writers, whose Example we were of Opinion might safely be follow'd, and whom we have likewise endeavour'd to vindicate in the *Eclaircissements* which we added to the Poem of Friendship, by shewing that no Author can rightfully be accus'd of striking at any one, when in the Picture he draws of Vice under an imaginary Character, he represents nothing but the very Vice he attacks. All this perfectly agrees with most of M. de la Bruyere's Portraits, as that Judicious Writer takes a Pleasure in confessing. When an Author has taken these Precautions, adds he, there is no Handle for demanding of him a Key to the Names he makes use of:

of: But if People will obstinately persist in their Demand, he may answer that the only Key to his Work is, the vicious corrupt Man, since that was the sole Original he drew from. Thus, he cannot be made responsible for those Keys which every body forges at Pleasure, and which are spread abroad in the World upon such Occasions. The Author being no otherwise necessary to them, than by giving a general Description of Vice; the only Persons who are justly to be charg'd with Calumny, are they who insisting that a Moral Work is a Satire, will likewise have it that there is a Key to it, and are at great Pains to make one which they give out for the true one. This is what has lately happen'd with Respect to the Book entituled, The Manners of the Age; but the Author of it has sufficiently expos'd this way of proceeding in the last Edition of his Book.

M. de Vigneul-Marville should have read those Reflexions and answer'd 'em, before he had run down M. de la Bruyere's Portraits as unnatural, as *Sphinxes and Chimeras*, under pretext that the greatest Part of them agree with no Body at all, i. e. with no certain Person distinguish'd therein by particular Touches, which cannot possibly agree with any other. In this Sense, it is true, most of them are nothing but *Chimera's*. But what Colour of Justice has any Man for alledging they are Portraits of certain particular Persons, when there's nothing seen in 'em which marks those Persons, more than a thousand others beside? 'Tis just as if we shou'd without any Proof suppose that *Moliere* intended to represent, under the Name of Mr. *Fourdain*, such a Citizen of *Paris*, living in *St. Honorius's Street*, and then fall upon the Author as a ridiculous Painter, in giving to that Citizen such Inclinations as he never had; viz. To learn Philosophy, or Fencing, though all the rest of the Character fitted him exactly. This wou'd be exposing the

the good Man without any Foundation, since not only it cannot be prov'd the Poet drew from him the Portrait of M. *Jourdain*; but because there's no Reason to suspect it, since the Cap no more fits him than a thousand other Citizens of *Paris*, who are touch'd with the same Folly.

But if our Censurer persists in treating as chimerical all the Characters of M. *de la Bruyere*, which cannot exactly be apply'd to any one Person, exclusive of all others, what will he say of those of *Theophrastus*, which are all of that Kind? And how will he call so many Characters which *Moliere* has thrown into his Comedies, and which have been hitherto thought so natural by all People, yet without once thinking to look on 'em as exact Pictures of Mr. such a one, as Mrs. such a one.

V. From what has been said, 'tis easy to conclude, that M. *de Vigneul-Marville* has no great Reason to condemn the Portraits of M. *de la Bruyere* upon Account of their being over-colour'd. For by this he either means that they have no Verisimilitude, and that they suppose Things incompatible in one and the same Subject, which will never be believ'd upon his Word, so long as a Man may assure himself of the contrary by his own Eyes. Or else, he supposes these Pictures over-colour'd, because they do not quadrate with any Person in particular. But instead of concluding that these Portraits are over-colour'd or too much loaded, because they do not quadrate with any Person in particular, he ought to conclude, that, since they are so loaded, they were not drawn to represent such or such a Person with Exclusion of all others; and that it was on purpose to prevent their being look'd upon as Copies of certain particular Persons, that the Author loaded them

them with a great many Touches, which are hardly to be found in one single Subject. This is what M. de Vigneul-Marville might have learnt from M. de la Bruyere's Preface to his Speech before the Royal Academy: Or if he did not like that Preface, he might have seen as much in the Speech of Thanks made by l'Abbé Fleuri to that Academy, when he was chosen to succeed M. de la Bruyere: For when he came to speak of his Book of the Manners of the Age, he expressly observes, that his Pictures are sometimes purposely loaded and over-colour'd, that they might not appear too like. And thus you have a clear Explanation of the Ænigma with which M. de Vigneul-Marville was so very much puzzl'd.

VI. But, replies our Censurer, it is not true that M. de la Bruyere had no body in his Eye; and tho' he has deny'd the Thing with Execrations, he cannot disown (if a Man of Honour) that he drew Santeuil's Picture under the Name of Theodas. Why not disown it, if he's so ill a Man as to deny with Execrations what he knows to be true? But M. de Vigneul-Marville gives us by this a frightful Idea of M. de la Bruyere without any colour of Reason: And if he is himself a Man of Honour, he ought to make a public Reparation to the Memory of an honest Gentleman, whom he represents to the World as the most infamous of all Men. For if, according to the Judicious Remark of M. de la Bruyere, he who is incessantly saying that he has Honour, that he has Probity, and swears to it in order to be believ'd, does not so much as know how to counterfeit an honest Man: What shall we say of him, who with horrible Oaths denies the doing of a thing which he may be easily convicted of, and which he cannot but own, I will not say if he's a Man of Honour, for such he cannot be after having in so base a manner abus'd what is most Sacred in the

the World? Now such a Man is *M. de la Bruyere* himself, if we give credit to *M. de Vigneul-Marville*. But never was Calumny more palpable and more barbarous than that of this rash Censurer. I cou'd here give a Loose to Passion: I feel it rising: But I will curb myself, that I may not do wrong to Innocence by defending it with too much warmth. The Fact is this. After *M. de la Bruyere's* Book had been public for some time, People wou'd needs be guessing at the Originals of the Characters which he had inserted in that Work. Thereupon, some fell to drawing Lists of all the People whom they fancy'd *M. de la Bruyere* intended to represent in the several Places of his Book. These pretended Keys, tho hardly any of them the same, (which suffic'd to shew their Falsity) went all about the Town, insomuch that *M. de la Bruyere* thought himself at length oblig'd to disown them: And did so, in the Preface which he put to his Speech before the Royal Academy, and which he inserted in his Book of Characters. I shall not repeat all that he says upon this Head. I shall content my self with citing the Passage which *M. de Vigneul-Marville* had in all Probability regard to, when he says that *M. de la Bruyere* denies with Execrations his having in his Eye any Person whatever when he wrote this Book. Since I have been so weak, says *M. de la Bruyere*, as to publish these Characters, what Bank shall I raise against that Deluge of Explainers, which overspreads the Town, and which will soon reach the Court? Shall I protest seriously, and bind it with horrible Oaths, that I am neither the Author of, nor Accomplice in forging, those Keys which are handed about, that I never deliver'd any such to any Person; that my most familiar Friends know I always refus'd to let them have any such Thing; that some of the most considerable Men at Court have despair'd of being ever let into the Secret? Won't it not be all one as if I

shou'd

shou'd torment my self in maintaining that I'm no ill Man, without Modesty, Morals, Conscience, such a one in short, as the Gazetteers I just now nam'd wou'd fain represent me to be, in their scandalous Libel?

How does it appear from these Words, that *M. de la Bruyere* deny'd with Execrations that he had any Person in his Eye, when he wrote his Book? Is not the contrary rather seen with the utmost Evidence? For if *M. de la Bruyere* refus'd a Key to his best Friends; if the greatest Men at Court despair'd of being let into the Secret, is it not visible, that *M. de la Bruyere* did sometimes designedly represent certain particular Persons? And indeed, he frankly declares the same himself, in another Place of that Preface: *'Tis true I did paint after Nature,* says he, *but I did not ALWAYS intend to paint Mr. such a one, or Mrs. such a one, in my Book of Manners.* If he did not *always* intend it, he therefore intended it *sometimes*. The Consequence is indisputable.

VII. It is, in short, true that *M. de la Bruyere's* Book contains some *personal Characters*: I beg leave, for Brevity's Sake, to call by that Name those Kinds of Portraits, wherein *M. de la Bruyere* has so plainly drawn some Persons, in Colours so peculiar to them, that a Man may say, 'tis Mr. such a one, or Mrs. such a one. Now let's see what it is that *M. de Vignac-Marville* finds to carp at in them. He thinks, *they are not entirely done after the Life. The Author having mingled therewith Fancies, of his own.* But, adds he, 'tis in this that he is to blame; for as there is no Man but has two Sides, a good one, and a bad one, he had giv'n less Offence if he had represented them entire, than to take them only on the bad Side, and to load that too with an extraordinary ridicule of borrow'd Vices. We have just now seen how Portraits may

not be chimerical, tho' they do not represent any certain Person in particular, exclusive of all others. As for such as are really *personal*, and which are the Subject of the present Question, *M. de Vigneuil-Marville* ought not have barely averr'd, that *M. de la Bruyere* disfigures them with false Colours; he should have prov'd it by incontestible Examples. Besides, in saying that *M. de la Bruyere* represents only the bad Side of People, he clearly discovers that he never examin'd those Characters near-hand, and that it wou'd be the wrongest Thing a Man cou'd do to rely upon the Judgment *He* makes of them. We need only cast an Eye upon some of these Characters to be convinc'd, that *M. de la Bruyere* takes therein a Pleasure to do Justice to the Merit of the Persons he meant to describe, and that, instead of representing only the bad Side of People, he sets to view their good Qualities as genuinely, and with at least as lively Colours as he does their Failings. This will easily appear from some Examples.

M. de Vigneuil-Marville will have it that under the Name of *Theodas*, *M. de la Bruyere* has given us the Portrait of *M. de Santeuil*, Regular Canon of *St. Victor*, one of the best *Latin* Poets that appear'd in *France* in the XVII. Century. The same is affirm'd in the *Menagiana*, and I make no Difficulty to believe it: For besides that *M. de la Bruyere* gives to his *Theodas* an extraordinary Genius for *Latin* Poetry, there are in that Picture some other Touches which can hardly suit with any but *M. Santeuil*. Yet I will not averr it so positively as is done in the *Menagiana*, and in the *Melanges d'Histoire & de Literature*: For, I cannot prove it to those who shou'd incline to make a Doubt of it after what I've been saying. But supposing that *M. de la Bruyere* had own'd it to us, himself; let us see if we may from

from thence conclude with M. de Vigneul-Marville that M. de la Bruyere has only shown us the worst Side of those he meant to describe, without taking any Notice of their good Qualities. The very first Line does visibly convince us of the contrary. *Imagine*, says M. de la Bruyere, speaking of Theodas, or if you will of M. de Santeuil, *Imagine a Man easy, soft, complaisant, tractable, and then all of a sudden choleric, furious and capricious; conceive a Man simple, ingenuous, credulous, a trifler and giddy, a Child with grey hairs; but permit him to recollect himself, or rather to give himself up to a certain Genius that operates within him, perhaps without his being concern'd, and it may be without his knowledge: What Rapture! what Elevation! what Figures! what Latinity! You will ask me, Do you speak of one and the same Man? Yes, of the same Theodas, and of him alone. He cries, labours, rolls on the ground, rises, thunders and roars, and from the midst of the Tempest comes a Light which warms and delights us; let us speak without a Figure, he talks like a Fool, and thinks like a Wise Man; speaks Truth in a ridiculous Way, and in Folly shews Sense and Reason: What shall I say further? He talks and acts better than he thinks he does; there are in him, as it were, two Souls that are not acquainted, have no dependance on one another, and have each their Turns and distinct Functions. This Picture wou'd want one surprizing Stroke, shou'd I omit to tell you that he is at once covetous and insatiably desirous of Praise; ready to expose himself to his Criticks, and in the main pliable enough to profit by their Censures. I begin to fancy myself that I have drawn the Picture of two different Persons, and 'tis not impossible to find a Third in Theodas, for he is a good, pleasant and excellent Man.*

Is this a representing of People in their worst Light only? Rather, who wou'd not chuse to have the little Failings which M. de la Bruyere observes in Theodas, on condition of meriting the Prais-

ses he bestows on him? I make M. de Vignul-Marville himself Judge in the Case.

See another Portrait in M. de la Bruyere's Book, which suits with but one Man. A Person appears dull, sottish and stupid, knows neither how to speak, or relate what he has seen; if he sets to write, no Man does it better; he makes Animals, Stones, and Trees talk, and every Thing that cannot Talk. His Works are full of nothing but Elegance, Natural Sense and Delicacy.

By these Words we discover the Famous de la Fontaine, that perfect Original in the Art of Narration, wherein he surpass'd by far all who went before him, and will perhaps never have his Equal. But does this Picture exhibit only the Faulty side of him? Quite contrary: For if on the one Hand we are told that he seem'd heavy, dull, stupid (which he had in common with the * Prince of Latin Poets) we are soon given to understand, that it was a deceitful Appearance, and that under this indifferent Exterior was conceal'd an extraordinary and inimitable Genius, which the Painter takes a Pleasure to set in the fairest Light he cou'd possibly give it; so that while we are admiring all those rare Qualities united in one single Subject, we are no less charm'd with the Penetration of him who so well understood them, and with his Artfulness in describing them in so lively a manner to us. But his Sincerity is no less commendable upon this Occasion than his Discernment; for if it be true, as the Duke de la Rochefoucault says, that it is a sort of participating in glorious Actions to praise them heartily,

* Virgil; who is said to have been very heavy in Conversation, and not unlike an ordinary illiterate Man; Sermone tardissimum ac pene indocto similem Melifonus tradidit. This you will find in his *Epile*, teridem verbis.

M. de la Bruyere undoubtedly deserves great Commendations for those he gives with so good a Grace to them who are worthy of them.

I confess he does not forget the Weaknesses of those whose excellent Qualities he so well recommends. But he cou'd not do otherwise, if he wou'd shew them to us Entire. For if we represent only the Bright-side of Mankind, we can no more make them known, than a Painter, who desiring to represent to us the Air of the King of Sweden, shou'd content himself with painting to us his Forehead, or having seen nothing of that young Hero but his Forehead, shou'd paint all the rest of his Face after his own Fancy. If an Historian says nothing of his Hero but what is good, he's a base Flatterer, or wants Memoirs: let him enquire further before he publishes his Work. For, in short, if there be any such thing as a general Maxim without Exception; 'tis doubtless this, *No Man is without Faults; he is most perfect who has fewest.* And consequently, a true Historian ought to speak well and ill of Men in order to represent them as they really are; by this he distinguishes himself from the Satirist, who heightens and exaggerates their Vices, and from the Panegyrist, who solely bends himself to illustrate the Virtues which his Hero either has, or which he supposes in Him. This is what the Count de Buffy was very sensible of: For after having said, that what he had written concerning M. de Turenne in his *Memoirs*, will meet with more Credit and do him more Honour than the Funeral Orations which have been made on him; because 'tis notorious, that the Authors of such Orations, speak only to Praise, and that himself wrote only for the sake of Truth; he adds, *Moreover, 'tis more probable that my Portraits bear a Likeness than those of the Panegyrist; because I speak Good and Evil of the same*

Persons; they speak nothing but Good; and no body is perfect in this World.

• Here our Censurer will perhaps say, that tho' M. de la Bruyere has sincerely represented the good and bad Qualities of M. Santeuil and M. la Fontaine, it does not follow that he observes the same Practice in the other Personal Characters which he was pleas'd to give us. This is true. But supposing that M. de la Bruyere has expos'd only the Faulty-side of some other Persons, it does not follow that he always did so: and consequently M. de Vigneul-Marville was in the Wrong to lay his Objection in such general Terms. But what will he say, if ev'n the Character which he cites out of M. de la Bruyere's Books, cannot prove, as he pretends it does, that That Illustrious Author took delight in exposing only the vicious Side of People? This Character is That of *Menalcas*, a borrow'd Name, under which M. de la Bruyere presents us with a Man, who through a mighty Distraction of Mind, commits ridiculous Blunders; which, tho' very numerous, are extremely diverting for their Singularity.

Is there in the whole Narration any Particularity, which puts it out of doubt that M. de la Bruyere meant to describe such a Person with Exclusion of all others? I see nothing like it. It belongs to M. de Vigneul-Marville who believes it, to convince us of it by good Proofs. Otherwise, he is to blame to instance in that Example. But why shou'd he torment himself in seeking who is design'd by *Menalcas*? M. de la Bruyere has sav'd him that Trouble by a Note which he put at the beginning of that Character. This, says he, *is not so much any one particular Character, as an Enumeration of Blunders: If they are agreeable, they can't be too many; for Men's Tastes being different, they may chuse which they please.* What wou'd

wou'd M. de Vigneul-Marville pretend to after this? Wou'd he have us believe Him sooner than M. de la Bruyere? But is it likely that he shou'd know an Author's Thought better than the very Author who produc'd it? It is true, this Declaration of M. de la Bruyere wou'd prove nothing, if there cou'd be found in *Menalcas's* Character such things as certainly agree with one certain Person, and which can't possibly agree with any other. But till M. de Vigneul-Marville has made that Discovery, he has no Pretence to contradict M. de la Bruyere. And what a fine Condition wou'd Authors be in, if the first Man who shou'd take it into his Head to criticize them, was suffer'd to explain their Intentions without any regard had to their Words, *i. e.* to lend them what Thoughts they pleas'd, however opposite to what they deliver'd in exprefs Terms, and in a very intelligible Manner?

I know very well that in the *Menagiana* 'tis said, that by this *Menalcas* is to be understood the late Count de Brancas; but 'tis only set down as a flying Report and a simple Conjecture, which M. Menage dropt in Conversation, on purpose to have a Handle for bringing in two Instances of that Count's Distractions or Blunders, as odd and as extraordinary as any of those which M. de la Bruyere attributes to his *Menalcas*. *The World will have it, that the Menalcas in M. de la Bruyere's Book is the late Count de Brancas.* These are the very Words of the *Menagiana*. Judge if this be a very authentic Testimony, and whether M. de Vigneul-Marville has good Grounds to tell us afterwards, that *Menalcas*, who is of an Illustrious Family, was dishonour'd by M. de la Bruyere. *The false Menalcas, says this grave Censurer, being substituted in the Minds of Men, in the room of the true Menalcas, dishonours this latter; and leaves a foul Blemish on his Family which is Illustrious.* This

way of Arguing is none of the most Cogent, but let it pass. Here then we have the true *Menalcas* dishonour'd, and all his Posterity with him. Whom must we blame? *M. de la Bruyere*, who no where names the true *Menalcas*, and who says nothing but what quadrates with a hundred others as well as him: or *M. Menage* and the Compilers of his Conversations, who set down his Name and Quality, and who inform us by Facts very Circumstantial, and which they give for true, that he may very well be the Original to the feign'd *Menalcas*? I refer it to *M. Vigneul-Marville* himself. But is it not a pleasant Thing to see this rigid Censor so very much scandaliz'd at the Satyrical Portraits which he pretends are interspers'd in the *Characters of the Age*; him I say, who without sparing either the Dead or the Living, criticizes right or wrong, all sorts of Persons, without troubling himself to conceal their Names? I don't desire to be believ'd upon my bare Word. Read what the Author of the *Nouvelles de la Republique des Lettres* says of him in the Extract he made of *M. Vigneul-Marville's* Book. [January 1700.] Some People may perhaps be offended, says that Judicious Writer, at *M. Vigneul-Marville's* speaking so freely, and, if I may have leave to say it, IN SO SHOCKING A MANNER, of divers Persons, without distinguishing such as are dead from such as are yet living. But the generality of Readers will not quarrel with him upon that score. Satire is pretty generally relish'd; and provided one's own self is not personally concern'd in it, we are not over-apt to fly into a Passion when we meet with it in a Book. I shall give an Example of one of those Places where the Author seems not to have spar'd either the Dead or the Living, &c. The rest may be seen in the *Republique des Lettres*, at the Place I have quoted. Upon which I can't, forbear saying with *Madam Des-Houlieres*: Impotent Reason, thou whom Man boasts

to much of ; Behold, what a sandy Foundation you afford ! Ever vain, ever false, ever full of Injustice, we exclaim, in all our Discourses, against those Passions, those Infirmities, those Vices into which we daily fall.

After this Criticism on M. de la Bruyere's *Portraits*, our Censurer makes one general and two particular Remarks against the *Characters of the Age*. And since Errors in Thoughts are much more considerable than those in Words, we will look into those Remarks before we examine his Reflexions on the *Stile* of that Work.

VIII. M. de la Bruyere, * says he, begs the Reader at the beginning of his Book "to have his Title in View, and to remember that he describes the Characters or Manners of the present Age. I have carefully follow'd this Advice of M. de la Bruyere's ; but I find that in following it, a Man is often led out of the way, and that a third Part of M. de la Bruyere's Book ought to be cut out, as not at all pertaining to his Design. Instead of enlarging his Work, he should have contracted it, and kept to the Characters of this present Age, without running Riot among a hundred Things, which do not distinguish our Age from the Preceding, but which have been common to all. And therefore what he says concerning Beauty, Love, Friendship, and the like, are out of their Place, and utterly foreign to the purpose. Here are a great many Words, and yet they import but this single Assertion, That there are, according to M. de Vigneul-Marville, several Things (in M. de la Bruyere's Book) foreign to the purpose : So that, if we wou'd take his Advice, we cou'd not do better than to proscribe the third Part of that

* Melange d'Histoire, p. 342.

Work. But this Censurer does not consider that he is only a Party in this Affair ; that his own Opinion is to go for nothing ; and that he can't expect to win the Cause without fully proving all that he alledges against the Author, whom he has undertaken to criticize. Besides, if there's any Objection that requires to be thoroughly handled, and to be discuss'd with the greatest Exactness, 'tis undoubtably that which he now makes. I don't believe *M. de la Bruyere* to be infallible, or that his Work is without Faults : No, I am persuaded that in this way of writing (by independent Thoughts) it is next to impossible not to put down some Things which are not altogether essential to one's Subject. But on the other Hand, 'tis almost as difficult to demonstrate clearly and in an undeniable Manner that such Things as are inserted in his Book are foreign to his Purpose. As a Thought is capable of having different References, a Man should precisely know that which the Author had in his Mind, (which is no easy thing to divine) before he can safely say it is not in its Place, but foreign to the Purpose. This single Reflexion wou'd have prevented our Critic from deciding too hastily, and without good Grounds, that one third of *M. de la Bruyere's* Book ought to be retrencht. One of the principal Reasons which induc'd him to pass this terrible Decree, was, it seems, because *he found in the Book a great many Things which do not distinguish our Age from any that were before it.* But where is it that *M. de la Bruyere* engages not to insert in his Book any thing but what may distinguish ours from other Ages ? He promises us the *Characters or Manners of this present Age.* That's the Title of his Book : And his Design is to paint Mankind in general, without confining his Portraits to any one Court, or any one Country, as he declares to us him-

himself in his † Preface. His Business therefore is to represent our Manners such as they really are. If he does this he makes good his Promise. But whether or no our Age be distinguish'd from the former by these Portraits, is no Concern of his. And, (by the bye) I know not but such a Design of describing one Age by such Things as shou'd agree with no other, wou'd be full as ridiculous, as that of a Painter, who shou'd be minded to paint the Men of this Age without e'er a Nose, or a Chin, the better to distinguish them from those who liv'd in the preceeding Ages. Men have always been the same with Respect to the Heart, always subject to the same Passions and Infirmities, always capable of the same Virtues, and the same Vices. The Actors change, but 'tis still the same Farce. Other Men will soon play the same Parts which are now play'd. *They in their turn will disappear, as M. de la Bruyere somewhere says, and those who do not yet exist will one Day cease to Be.* A true Image of this World, which manifestly demonstrates, that this present Age cannot be perfectly described, without using an infinite Number of Strokes, which no less correspond with the preceding Ages than this of ours. If then M. de Vigneul-Marville has found a great many Lineaments, which do not difference our Age from other Ages, instead of proscribing them for that Reason, he ought to have concluded that these Lineaments were certainly very conformable to Nature, which continually acts after much the same Manner in all Ages. And this is constantly the Inference which we draw from reading the Books of the Ancients. For Instance; we think Terence has perfectly well drawn a Debauchée,

† P. 61. Brussels Edition. 1697.

a Villain, an amorous young Man, &c. Why, Because the Portraits he makes of 'em, exactly agree with the Debauchées, Villains, and amorous young Men, whom we see now-a-days. Upon the same Foundation it is that we admire the Justness of *Theophrastus's* Characters. *The Men whose Manners Theophrastus painted*, says M. de la Bruyere, were Athenians, and we are Frenchmen; and if we add to the Diversity of Place and Climate, the long Interval of Time, and consider that this Book was wrote in the last Year of the CXVth Olympiad, Three hundred and fourteen Years before the Christian Æra, and that 'tis above two thousand Years since that People of Athens lived, of whom he draws the Picture, we may be amaz'd at discovering our selves there, our Friends, our Enemies, those whom we live with; and that being distant from each other so many Ages, the Resemblance shou'd be so great. In short, Men in their Souls and Passions, change not, but are still the same they were, and as they are describ'd by Theophrastus, Vain, Dissemblers, Flatterers, Selfish, Impudent, Importunate, Distrustfull, Backbiters, Quarrelsome, and Superstitious.

A Word more upon this Head: I wou'd ask M. Vigneul-Marville whether he thinks that M. Boileau has drawn a true Picture of this present Age in these Verses:

O! Money, Money! is the charming Sound;
Without it, ev'ry Thing's but barren Ground.
Virtue without it is a useless Good,
As little valu'd as 'tis understood.

A Rascal, who has Money, is ador'd;

'Tis Money gains the Cause, and makes the Lord.

He will, doubtless, answer me that this is visibly one of the Characters of the present Age. But is it a Character that distinguishes our Age from the preceding? M. Vigneul-Marville will never say it. He is too conversant among the Ancients, not to know that a * famous Poet in the Age of Augustus said in *Latin* what M. Boileau tells us in *French* in the Age of Lewis XIV. Now if M. Boileau was able to draw the present Age with Features which exactly correspond with those already past, why might not M. de la Bruyere do the same thing?

IX. The next particular Remark which M. Vigneul-Marville makes against M. de la Bruyere, is, *That he often makes a Mystery of what is not so.* I call this Remark particular, because our Critic confirms it but by one Example, and that (you shall see) so ill chosen, that I don't think any body will for the future be inclin'd to rely upon his Judgment. Thus, (continues our Censor) in Pag. 468. to make us comprehend what is sufficiently comprehensible of it self, that sound Judgment is the scarcest thing in the World; he exaggerates and pronounces with the Tone of a Prophet this wonderful Sentence. † "Next to sound Judgment, Diamonds and Pearls are the rarest Things to be met with. Our Critic, if I'm not deceiv'd, makes two false Suppositions in this Place; one, that M. de la Bruyere means to inform us, that sound Judgment is very rare to meet with. This, in my Opinion, is what he never thought of. He contents himself with proposing it as a Thought worthy of Remark, and on which every body

* Hor. Lib. Ep. i. O Cives, Cives, querenda pecunia primum est, &c.

† M. de la Bruyere's Words, Ch. XII.

ought to reflect, in order to accustom themselves to Self-Diffidence, and not too hastily to imagine they understand what they really do not: A Failing too frequent among Men, and the grand Source of those Errors into which they fall every Moment! The second ill-grounded Supposition which our Critic makes here, is, his fancying it so easy a thing to comprehend, *that sound Judgment is a very scarce Thing*. Far from it: 'Tis perhaps the thing which is least comprehended by Mankind; for none but such as have sound Judgment (whose Number is doubtless very small) do comprehend how rare a thing sound Judgment is, and how scarce it is in the World. And to the great Surprise of *M. de Vigneul-Marville* be it spoken, the very manner in which he himself refutes *M. de la Bruyere*, proves visibly that 'tis no easy matter to comprehend how rare a thing sound Judgment is, and how much it concerns People to be advertis'd, that it is a thing extremely scarce. This will soon be seen. Next to sound Judgment, *Diamonds and Pearls* are the rarest Things to be met with in the World, says *M. de la Bruyere*. This Turn does not please *M. de Vigneul-Marville*; and thus he expresses himself upon it. Ordinary People, says he, admire this Passage, as one of those bright Turns which *M. de la Bruyere* has the peculiar Skill to give to his Thoughts; and yet it is only a Thought turn'd upside down, and enshased in a socket of meer Jargon. For it is not true that *Diamonds and Pearls* are very scarce Things, and so rare that nothing is more so, but sound Judgment; which must be suppos'd, in order to maintain *M. de la Bruyere's* Thought, and to make it rational. *Diamonds and Pearls* are indeed Things of Price; but as to Scarcity there are a thousand Things in France, and elsewhere, more scarce than either *Pearls or Diamonds*; and we might sooner meet with ten Bushels of *Diamonds and Pearls* at

Paris

Paris than ten or twelve Sheets of China-Paper. Thus Pearls and Diamonds being Things pretty common, tho of great Price, M. de la Bruyere must be forc'd to conclude, in Spite of himself, if he will hold to good Sense, that sound Judgment is not the rarest Thing to be met with in the World. Had M. de Vigneul-Marville been paid for proving sound Judgment (or Discernment) to be a very scarce thing, he cou'd not have more effectually done it, than by arguing in this glorious Manner; in which, not discerning Paris from the rest of the World, he confounds two Objects, between which there's a greater Difference than between a Fly and an Elephant. *We might soon find, says he, at Paris ten Bushels of Diamonds and Pearls, sooner than ten or twelve Sheets of China-Paper; Ergo, M. de la Bruyere was in the wrong to say that next to sound Judgment, Diamonds and Pearls are the rarest Things to be met with in the World. What, because China-Paper is scarcer at Paris than Pearls, is it also scarcer than Pearls ev'n in the Kingdom of China, which is undoubtedly in the World, since it is one of the finest Parts of it? Is it not after this very difficult to comprehend that sound Judgment is so scarce as it really is, since such penetrating and judicious Writers as M. de Vigneul-Marville is, shou'd sometimes be so far deceiv'd as to take Paris for the World, a Part for the Whole?

X. Our Critic's second particular Remark is, that M. de la Bruyere has the Gift of contradicting himself, and not to understand his own Words. This appears, says he, in the very beginning of his Book. H. is speaking in Favour of Antiquity, and retails that generally receiv'd Thought, viz. That the Ancients have said every thing that can be said; that we Moderns come too late to say any thing new. ¹ Every thing has been said,

cries.

"cries *M. de la Bruyere*, and We are come too late
 "after above seven thousand Years that there have
 "been Men, and Men have thought. The finest
 "and most beautiful Thoughts concerning Man-
 "ners have been carry'd away before our Times,
 "and we can do nothing now but glean after the
 "Ancients". *This is all good: But as if M. de la*
Bruyere had repented of his Proposition, he joins to the
Ancients (which spoils all) the most ingenious of the
Moderns. For he thereby equals the Moderns to the An-
cients, and shews, that since there are Moderns as well
as Ancients who may be gleaned after, the Ancients did not
say all that cou'd be said, or that they carry'd away before
our time all the finest and most beautiful Thoughts concern-
ing Manners. But the Cunning of this judicious Contra-
dition lies here, M. de la Bruyere had a Mind to fence
against the Reproach that might have been thrown on him
for not being a quite new Author. 'Twas therefore to do
himself Honour, that he introduces, against his own Max-
im, ingenious Moderns who are no less inventive in the
Subjects of Morals than the Ancients. So many Words, so
many false Suppositions and ill-grounded Conclusions.
M. de la Bruyere does not here dream in the
least of equalling the Moderns to the Ancients.
He does not say that the Ancients have carry'd off
before us all and every the finest and most beauti-
ful Thoughts concerning Manners; but only that
the Ancients and most ingenious of the Moderns
having carry'd off the finest Thoughts; there now
remains to those who are minded to write on Man-
nars, but few new Reflexions to make upon that
important Subject. And consequently M. de la
Bruyere does not contradict himself in saying at the
beginning of his Book; Every thing has been said,
and we are come too late after above seven thousand Years
that there have been Men and Men have thought. The
finest and most beautiful Thoughts concerning Manners
have

have been carried away before our Times, and we can do nothing now but glean after the Ancients, and the most ingenious of the Moderns. There is not, I say, any Contradiction in these Words, but rather a great Modesty which every equitable Man ought to praise and admire, after having read M. de la Bruyere's Book, where a Man cannot but see a great many fine Things, which he might in vain look for in the Works of the most ingenious, either Ancients or Moderns. M. de Vigneul-Marville perhaps plays upon the Word *All*, which he takes rigidly for a metaphysical Universality, and capable of no Exception; but 'tis visible that in this Place it shou'd be taken loosely and popularly for the greater Part of the Things in Question, and that too in an indeterminate Number, as when we say, *All Paris is gone out to meet the King, &c.*

Again, the Science of Manners is so far from being entirely exhausted by the Ancients, that on the contrary it seems reasonable to believe (without any Imputation of Self-sufficiency) that there will be made new Discoveries therein, as long as there shall be Men upon the Earth: so various and so capable of infinite Combinations are the Desires, the Views, the Complexions, and Passions of that Species of the Creation. This is the Sentiment of * a Great Master this way, who has himself discover'd upon the Subject of Manners a Multitude of Things, which, I believe, a Man wou'd be hard put to't to find in those Ancients to whom M. de Vigneul-Marville will have it, that nothing was unknown of that Nature. *Whatever Discovery has been made in the Country of † Self-love,*

* The Duke of Rochefoucault.

† The Great if not the Only Motive of humane Actions.

|| says he, *there yet remains a great many unknown Lands.*

XI. Now let us see what M. de Vigneul-Marville finds amiss in the Stile of M. de la Bruyere's Book. He condemns it without any manner of Ceremony. *I confess,* says he, *that if M. de la Bruyere had made choice of a good Stile, if he had written with Purity, and finish'd off his Portraits more than he has done, a Man cou'd not without Injustice despise his Book. You have already seen what trust may be put in what this Critic has thought fit to publish against M. de la Bruyere's Portraits; and you shall now see whether he has any better Skill in Stile. He goes on thus: His way of writing, (according to M. Menage) is altogether new: But ne'er the better for that: 'tis a difficult thing to introduce a new Stile in Languages, and to succeed in it, especially when those Languages are arriv'd at their Perfection, as ours is at this Day.*

I know not what M. Vigneul-Marville means by Stile; but it seems to me to be nothing but a certain chaining of the Thoughts, express'd by Words, which shew how they are link'd to each other: So that, in Proportion as this linking is clear and rational, a Stile may be said to be more or less clear and exact. I suppose a Man understands his Language, without which the Discourse can't have that Purity and Clearness, which consists in the using proper Terms, in their just Distribution, and in whatever renders the Diction exact and easy to be understood. To conclude; what makes a good Stile, is good Reasoning, and a natural Ordering of the Thoughts. And * as there is perhaps as much

|| *In his moral Reflexions, Reflex. 4.*

* *Est in hoc incredibilis quædam varietas: Nec pauciores animorum penè quàm corporum forme. Quintil.*

Difference between Men's Minds as their Faces, there are perhaps as many Stiles as Writers, because 'tis possible there are not two Men who conceive Things exactly in the same Order, and with the same Formality. This may be prov'd every Day by sensible Experiments. Let, for Example, two or three Persons write a Letter on the same Subject, they shall each take a various Turn, and put his Thoughts together in a different Manner; one more agreeably and more naturally than another: So that each Letter shall have its particular Stile, tho in the main the Thoughts shall not differ much. It is not, therefore, easy to comprehend what our Cenfor means when he says, *it is a difficult thing to introduce a new Stile*: For every Writer has his Stile. *Voiture* manages his Thoughts otherwise than *Balzac*. His Stile is freer, and seems less studied. *M. de Vigneul-Mirville's* manner of Narration is very unlike that of *M. Pellisson*. There is at least as great a Difference between them as between *Chapelain* and *Virgil*: And the Stile of *M. Pellisson* is no more like that of *M. Menage*, or Father *Bouhours*, than the Stile of Father *Bouhours* is like that of * *Cleante*, or Mr. *Fontenelle*. Further; the same Writer has not always the same Stile. Sometimes he's not in a Humour to write; and then his Stile has no longer the same Beauties it was wont to have. Sometimes he is more Diffuse than usual, for want of Leisure or Courage to chasten his Stile; to polish it and prune it of those Excrescencies, which in the Heat of Composing escap'd him. I remember a Story to this Purpose, in the *Life of Virgil*. 'Tis said †;

* M. Barbier Daucourt.

† Cum Georgica scriberet, traditur quotidie meditatos manū plurimos versūs dictare solitum, ac per totum diem tractando ad paucissimos redigere: non absurdè carmen sę ursę morē parere dicent, & lambendo demum affingere: In *Virg. Vita*.

That when he compos'd his *Georgics*, his Custom was in the Morning to dictate a considerable Number of Verses, and spend the rest of the Day in revising them, and by that time 'twas Night reduc'd them to a very small Number, which he call'd *licking the Bear*. Those Verses which *Virgil* compos'd in the Morning, were, doubtless, very different from those, which, if one may use the Expression, were distill'd from them the remaining Part of the Day. And if by chance any of those first Verses had come down to us, no doubt but many Critics wou'd have scarce believ'd they escap'd that great Poet, because of the little Resemblance there had been between those Verses and what we have of his.

But since we are upon the Difference of Stiles, it will not, I believe, be altogether remote from the Purpose, to hint by the bye, that one of the Things which contributes most to this Difference, is, the different Usage of Particles which have been invented to mark the Connexion which the Mind puts between the Ideas or Propositions that form a Discourse: *For when the Mind is desirous to communicate its Thoughts to Others, it not only chains together the Parts of the Propositions, but entire Sentences, in all their several Relations and Dependances, in order to form a Rational Discourse.* I take this Remark out of an excellent Book, translated from the English, which lately fell into my Hands. It is entitul'd *A Philosophical Essay concerning Human Understanding*. The Author is manifestly a Genius of the first Order, a Philosopher accurate and profound, who examines Things in their Source, and penetrates deep into all the Subjects he handles. Let this be said without warranting his System, the bottom whereof I have not yet seen. As for the Usage of Particles in Stile, what he adds upon that deserves to be mention'd, and is *Verbatim* as fol-

shows. That a Man may think well, it is not enough for him to have clear and distinct Ideas in himself, or to observe the Concord or Discord which there is between some of those Ideas, but he ought to link his Thoughts, and remark the Dependance which his Reasonings have with each other: And for the well expressing those Thoughts, when rang'd methodically and chain'd together by consequential Reasonings, he must have Terms to shew the Connexion, the Restriction, the Distinction, the Opposition, the Emphasis, &c. which he applies to every respective Part of his Discourse. And consequently, it is upon the just Application which is made of those Terms, that the Perspicuity and Beauty of a Stile principally depends, as the same Author observes. On the contrary, the Stile of a Discourse is obscure, ill-form'd, without Coherence and Strength, if those Particles are apply'd at random and without Reason. And if we wou'd speak properly of a Man who writes in that manner, we must say, not that he writes in a new Stile, but that he has no Stile at all.

Such Reflexions as these are despis'd by M. de Vigneul-Marville who makes the Novelty of Stile, which he upbraids M. de la Bruyere with, to consist in some Words which are improper, or which being join'd together compose Expressions not perfectly French. For after having said that it is difficult to introduce a new Stile in the Tongues, he goes on thus: Barclay, Justus Lipsius, and others who have been fond of Dabbling in Latin; have not been approv'd of by the wisest Critics: And in the French Tongue, Cirano de Bergerac, and the Translator of Gracian's Courtier, are intolerable. M. de la Bruyere condemns those Men and himself too, when he says in Chap. V: "Some Men shock us with their ridiculous Phrases, with the Novelty, and, I will boldly speak it, with the Impropiety of the Terms

“ Terms they make use of; such as the joining
 “ certain Words which are never to be found put
 “ together, except in their Mouths, and by ma-
 “ king them signify such Things as their first In-
 “ ventors never meant they shou’d. In Discourse
 “ they neither follow Reason nor Custom, but
 “ their own fantastic Genius. *Here you have M.*
de la Bruyere drawn to the Life, adds our subtil
 Critic.

XII. Happening, some few Days ago, to read
 this *Defence of M. de la Bruyere* to a certain Friend,
 I pointed him to this genteel Assertion of *M. de*
Vigneul-Marville’s: He took Fire at reading it, and
 could not forber apostrophizing to our Censurer,
 by that Verse of *Boileau*:

“ *Are you who thus pretend to talk, a Judge?*

“ You, *M. Vigneul-Marville*, whose Discourse
 “ is nothing but a Beadroll of improper, puerile,
 “ and monstrous Expressions; and of pitiful pro-
 “ verbial Phrases, which are hardly pardonable in
 “ a free Conversation, and by way of Joke, as
 “ *M. * St. Evremont* observes.” Our Critic did
 not think of that, when he made himself a Judge
 in an Affair where his Authority is for so many
 Reasons liable to be excepted against. He affects
 a great Squeamishness in the matter of Language.
 But whence arises this Squeamishness? From the
 Goodness of his Taste? How then comes his Book

* *An Orator*, says he, ought to avoid empty Quibbles, Proverbs,
 &c. as being the evil Effects of a mean Education, and unworthy
 of true Eloquence. We scarce pardon them in a Gentleman, ev’n
 tho’ he uses them jocularly over a Bottle. Vol. I p. 293.

to be so ill written? How comes he to fill it with so many vulgar Expressions, so much bad French, and such improper, obscure, affected Phrases? If you will not believe me, read what follows.

* Whenever Moreri meets with an Author, who dilates himself upon Nothing, he dilates with him. What a way of speaking is this, *'s'epancher*, to dilate a Man's self with another upon Nothing! Is it founded upon Reason, upon Custom, or upon the whimsical Genius of the Person who is pleas'd to make use of it? I appeal to Himself.

† A man lets fly a captious Argument at M. Simon: He receives it with a good grace, cleaves it in two with a subtil distinguish, and escapes thro' the Breach. I know not but Rural Wits, as our Critic elsewhere has it, may admire this noble Period; yet I very much doubt whether it will go down with Men of Sense and Politeness.

|| The Marechal de Bassompierre, being confin'd in the Bastile, spent his Time in reading good Books, and in composing Observations and Memoirs (*qui lui sont glorieux*, instead of *qui lui font honneur*,) which are vain-glorious instead of glorious for him.

* It looks as if the Muses had made it their Business to appropriate the Outside of the Books of M. Grolier's Library, so much Art and Wit appears in their Ornaments. Is not this a rare Thought, and the Expression noble and perfectly French; Books appropriated on the Outside, that is, Bound by the Muses?

† Tasso, at twelve Years of Age, study'd the Law, au Droit. We say, *etudier en Droit, en Philosophie, en Rhetorique*; but no Man ever said, *etudier au Droit, à la Philosophie*, &c. M. Vigneul-Marville is certainly

* Melanges d'Histoire & de Literature, p. 292.

† P. 186. || P. 132. * P. 154. † P. 142.

the first that ever spoke thus. Yet he's acquainted with the Rules of our Language. He has read those of M. Vaugelas and Father Bouhours. But some People read Rules which they don't take care to observe. And therefore our Critic gives a Regimen to *auparavant*, as if it were a Preposition; tho' M. Vaugelas expressly says that * the true Use of *auparavant*, is to apply it as an Adverb, not as a Preposition. *Bien auparavant cet Auteur, says M. Vigneul-Marville, deux celebres Ecrivains ont donne a leurs expressions toute la force qu'elles pourvoient souffrir.*

† Again, M. Gaudin, says our Critic, put a Spoke in Fortune's Wheel. A fine Expression! is it not very clear, and truly French?

† Messieurs Dupuy, with a Cato-like Gravity, took the Sciences by their most serious Handle, and cou'd not endure those who, if we may so say, were only the Punchanello's of Literature. Is not this Excellent and Polite, the Punchanello's of Literature? Do they speak thus among Carthusians? If so, our Author is to be excus'd for employing so pleasant an Expression which whole Order has consecrated. M. Vigneul-Marville understands me, and that's sufficient.

† 'Tis not long since the Eugenes and the Aristus's, who thought by their Bravado's to triumph over their Enemies, fell into the Hands of a severe Critic, who shav'd them so close, that the Poor Men look'd as if they were flay'd.

* Remarques sur la Langue Francoise, Tom. II. p. 293. You will find the same thing in the Doutes of F. Bouhours, p. 152, and in a Note of M. Corneille's on this Remark of Vaugelas.

† P. 335. p. 138, &c.

Is not M. Vigneul-Marville likewise turn'd Barber?
Has he not flay'd M. de la Bruyere? Are not these
Ideas brilliant and well-fancy'd?

† A very honest Gentleman, who design'd to write the
History of his Time, us'd to say, I will have no Favourite
Heroe: Virtue alone shall be my Heroine. M. Vigneul-
Marville quotes that honest Gentleman's Words too
faithfully. He might have made him talk a little
better French, without hurting his Heroine Truth.
We do not say, *je ne veux point d'heros*, but *de he-
ros*. This is the first Remark of M. Vaugelas.

Excuse me from pursuing this Criticism any fur-
ther. I began it for no other Reason but to make
M. Vigneul-Marville sensible that he ought to distrust
himself, and not too hastily take his Assertions for
Proofs.

XIII. But this is a Fault which he cannot easily
correct. Our Censurer is frequently guilty of it,
and is again so in what he adds immediately after.
It is true, says he, that this Gentleman had said before,
in Page 50. " * That a Man may in one sort of
" Writing (*he means his own*) venture certain Ex-
" pressions, make use of Terms which are trans-
" pos'd and which paint a Thing lively, and pity
" such as feel not the Pleasure which there is in
" making use thereof, or in understanding them."
I know not from whence our Critic learnt that
M. de la Bruyere in this place meant his own Works
more than a great many others wherein these Li-
berties are justly taken, as we shall see by and by.
But let that pass. Let us see what it is he finds amiss
in those Words. M. de la Bruyere, says he, *tickles*

† page. 385

* M. de la Bruyere's Words, Chap. 1.

himself here to make himself laugh. Certainly, he must be a very pretty Fellow that can fancy it a Pleasure to have to do with Difficulties. For is any thing more harsh and unpleasant than, in the French Tongue, (which being all smooth, follows exactly the Natural Order in its Constructions,) to transpose its Terms, and to create Confusion where there ought to be none? Rather, must not he be a very pretty Fellow that thinks he proves a Thing, when he does but suppose it? M. de Vigneul-Marville absolutely condemns Transpositions in the French Tongue, and M. de la Bruyere is of Opinion they may be allow'd in one sort of Writing, that is, if we believe our Censurer, in his own Characters of the Age. Who sees not that this hardy Critic ought not to have concluded, that Transpositions are contrary to the Genius of our Tongue, till he had first made appear by ten or a dozen Examples of Transpositions drawn out of M. de la Bruyere's Book, that they only serv'd to perplex the Discourse? Not that the Conclusion had been, ev'n then, very certain; for other Writers might have done That well which M. de la Bruyere knew not how to do. But be that as it will, M. de Vigneul-Marville thought this Discussion too troublesome; and therefore chose rather to proscribe in general all Transpositions, than take the pains to examine whether a Man is in the right to make use of them on certain Occasions. Even our Poets, continues he, to whom Transpositions are very helpful in Versification, have abandon'd them, and never use them but in the greatest Extremity, and when they cannot otherwise form their Verses. It is one of the Beauties of our Tongue not to transpose any thing, either in Prose or Poetry; and This, having been discover'd in the beginning of this Century by M. Natherbe and the President Mainard, is daily practis'd by the greatest Masters, ev'n with more Exactness than formerly. All this means, according to our Cri-

tic, that Transpositions ought to be entirely banish'd from Prose, and not admitted into Poetry without absolute Necessity. But this Decision is somewhat too general, as you shall see. It is certain, that since the Establishment of the *French Academy*, great Application has been made in polishing our Language, and Endeavours have been more especially us'd to render the Turn of it simple, easy, clear, and free from all Incumbrance. For this end, all obscure or equivocal Constructions have been condemn'd; and, in the Distribution of Words, the most natural Order follow'd, as being the least susceptible of Ambiguity. This Order consists in putting the Nominative Case at the beginning of a Proposition, and then the Verb with what it governs, the Adverb immediately before or after the Verb, &c. But is a Man oblig'd to observe this Order upon all Occasions? Yes, when any other Disposition is found contrary to Perspicuity and Clearness, to which all Things must be sacrific'd; for the sole End of Speech is to make our selves be understood. But instead of its being impossible ever to depart from this Order without darkening a Discourse, we are sometimes indispensably oblig'd to forsake it, either in Conformity to Custom, which has in a manner consecrated certain irregular Turns, or to bring a Period well off, which wou'd otherwise be languid, obscure and perplexing; besides that in an Oratorical Discourse, Transpositions have a very particular Beauty and Vivacity. All which we will now prove by Examples.

1. I say in the first place, that some Transpositions are so strongly authoriz'd by Custom, that the natural Construction wou'd be not only harsh, but perfectly barbarous. *The Case is plain*, says * Father

* In his Translation of *Persius*, Sat. IV.

Tartarus; so goes the World, we tear our Neighbour to pieces, and he tears us. Can a Frenchman, who knows his Language, speak otherwise? And shou'd we not justly treat as a *Visigoth*, a Man who desiring to follow the natural Order, on this Occasion shou'd say, *So the World goes, &c.*? By this Maxim, * says the New Translator of *Demosthenes*, conducted themselves the ancient and famous Orators, whom the Moderns continually praise without ever imitating; an *Aristides*, a *Nicias*, a *Pericles*, and that Great Man, &c. Here's another Transposition, conducted themselves the ancient Orators, but which is absolutely necessary. I can't believe that *M. Vigneul-Marville* cou'd prevail with himself to say, *By this Maxim the ancient and famous Orators, whom the Moderns continually praise, without ever imitating; an Aristides, &c. conducted themselves.* And indeed, tho' he was so great an Enemy to Transpositions as to say, That it is One of the Beauties of our Tongue not to transpose any thing, either in Prose or Verse; yet he himself happens sometimes to put the Nominative Case after the Verb. Thus, speaking of *Cicero's* Epistles to *Atticus*, he says (pag. 167.) *These Epistles will instruct us in the History of the Civil War, and what Cicero's Thoughts were concerning it* (*Et des sentiments qu'en avoit Cicéron.*) He might have said, *que Cicéron en avoit*, and the Sense wou'd have been ne'er the less disturb'd for that, but the other Turn seem'd to him the more agreeable One, or perhaps dropt from his Pen without his perceiving it.

2. In the Second place, nothing is more proper for the bringing a Discourse well off, than Transpositions seasonably made, as will be infallibly found by every Writer who understands and loves a Clear-

ness of Stile, and has any long-winded Work upon his Hands. *For this Reason,* * says a famous Orator, *the single Person of the Prince of Conde was worth, to France, whole Armies: That, when he took the Field, the most Formidable of the Enemies Forces were visibly intimidated by the Terror of his Name: That under him our weakest Troops became intrepid and invincible: That by his Care, our Frontiers were under Cover, and our Provinces in Safety: That under him were form'd and bred those season'd Soldiers, those experienc'd Officers, those Braves in all the Orders of War, who have since signaliz'd themselves in our last Wars, and who acquir'd so much Honour to the French Name, only by having had that Prince for their Master and Chieftain. Who sees not that this last Period wou'd have been very flat and disturb'd if the Orator had follow'd the Natural Order, as he had before done; and if he had said that, those season'd Soldiers, those experienc'd Officers, those Braves in all the Orders of War, who have since signaliz'd themselves in our last Wars, and acquir'd so much Honour to the French Name, only by having had that Prince for their Master and Chieftain, were form'd and bred under him?*

Here's another Example, where the Natural Construction is perfectly ridiculous. *It is a Book which that Gentleman, who came to visit me yesterday about six of the Clock in the Evening, when you were with me in my Library, gave me.* "This way of speaking, adds
 "† the Author from whom I borrow this Example, as
 "regular as it is, is ridiculous: And any Man may
 "easily see, that 'twere better to take the irregular

* Father Bourdaloue, in his Funeral Oration upon the Prince of Conde.

† Mr. Andry in his *Reflexions sur l'Usage present de la Langue Francoise*, p. 485.

“ Turn, and to say : *C'est un Livre que, m'a donné*
 “ *cette personne, &c.* This is a Thing so well known,
 “ continues that judicious Writer, that we have no Au-
 “ thor who writes otherwise : Not even such as are
 “ most incorrect, and least mindful of Politeness ;
 “ they all take this irregular Turn, rather than im-
 “ pertinently perplex a Phrase. Nor do I think
 M. de Vigneul-Marville is of another Opinion.

3. It remains for me to shew, that, in Discourses of a lively, nervous Stile, Transpositions have a more than ordinary Beauty. Our most celebrated Writers will furnish me with such Proofs of this, as I believe our Critic will not dare to contradict. I shall take the First out of the Works of M. S. Evreumont, that celebrated Author, who has given to his Expressions all the Strength they were capable of within the Bounds of Reason, as M. de Vigneul-Marville has very justly observ'd. I look upon the Preceptor of Nero, * says he, the Lover of Agrippina, as an Ambitious Man, who aspir'd to the Empire : The Philosopher and Writer, I make no great Account of. He might have said, I make no great Account of the Philosopher and Writer. But besides that the irregular Turn is more lively and harmonious, M. S. Evreumont found thereby the means of varying his Stile ; a Secret of such Importance, that he who knows it not, let him do what he can, shall never rise above the Character of a pitiful Writer.

† *A Frozen Stile that neither Ebbs nor Flows,
 Instead of pleasing, makes us gape and doze.
 Those tedious Authors are esteem'd by none,
 Who tire us, Humming the same heavy Tone.*

* Judgment of Seneca, &c. Tom. 1. p. 237.

† Boileau's Art of Poetry, Canto 1.

But if M. St. Evremond had a Right to employ Transpositions in a familiar Discourse, they may with much more Reason be us'd in public Discourses; which being animated by the Voice, ought to be compos'd in a more lively and nervous Stile. And therefore there is nothing more common than such irregular Turns in those sort of Compositions.

That Heart, greater than the Universe, says Father Bourdaloue in his Funeral Oration on the Prince of Conde; That Heart which all France may well Envy us; that Heart so solid, so upright, so worthy of God, he was pleas'd that we shou'd possess and be the Depositories of.

There wou'd be no End of quoting Examples of this kind, where a more regular Construction wou'd make the Discourse flat, and take from it that sweet Harmony which is so pleasing to the Ear in a Public Action.

But since M. Vigneul-Marville * seems to have an Esteem for the Rules of Father Bonhours, I can't do better than confirm what I have been saying, with a Judicious Remark made by that famous Grammarian concerning Transpositions being graceful upon some Occasions. *There are, according to † that Grammarian, some irregular Turns which are Elegant.* “ Examples, adds he, will shew what I mean. M. Maucroix says in the Second Homily of St. Chrysostom to the People of Antioch: *This Place which gave us Birth, we avoid it as an Ambush: - And* “ M. Patru says in his Plea for Madam de Guenegaud: “ *And yet this Sovereign, the new Constitutions degrade her; her whole Authority is annihilated, and no other* “ *Mark of Dignity left her but Reverences. The Supe-*

* Melanges d'Histoire. &c. p. 147.

† Remarques nouvelles sur la Langue Franc. Tom. I. p. 30.

rior does nothing but 'tis condemn'd; her most innocent Actions, they blacken them.

Now according to strict Rule, continues that Father, we shou'd say, *We avoid as an Ambush that Place which gave us Birth. And yet the new Constitutions degrade this Sovereign: they blacken her most innocent Actions.* We speak thus in Conversation, and in a plain simple Book; but in a public Action which is animated by the Voice, and which requires a more lively Eloquence, the irregular Turn is more beautiful. Upon these Occasions it is sometimes lawful to Orators as well as Poets, to dispense with the scrupulous Rules of common Construction: And we may almost say of Sermons and Pleadings, what the Author of the *Art of Poetry* says of *Ode*:

Her generous Stile will oft at random start,

And by a brave Disorder shew her Art.

But if such sort of Irregularities are Elegant in Prose, adds Father Bouhours, they are still more so in Poetry, which in it self is somewhat impetuous, and loves not a Language altogether uniform.

Now let any one judge, whether M. de la Bruyere was not in the Right to say, that in one sort of Writings a Man may use Terms which are transpos'd and which paint a thing lively; and whether on the other hand, M. Vigneul-Marville was not in the Wrong to assert, that it is one of the Beauties of our Tongue not to transpose any thing either in Prose or Poetry. No doubt there are some Transpositions forc'd, and contrary to the Sweetness and Perspicuity of a Language: But there are likewise others which have a very good Grace, and which can't be banish'd without depriving our Tongue of that lively, free and natural

tural Air, which makes one of its greatest Beauties. This is what was perfectly well understood by M. Vaugelas, that Judicious Author, whose Authority will be always of great Weight in this Point. For after having condemn'd certain Transpositions as too rugged, he adds, *Many ascribe to Poetry the Cause of these Transpositions, which are Ornaments in Versification, when perform'd like that of Malherbes, whose Poetry is incomparable for its Turn; but commonly they are Vices in Prose: I say commonly, because there are some which are very beautiful.* Observe how this prudent Writer avoids those general and absolute Decisions, which are almost always falsify'd by some uncontrovertible Exceptions.

XIV. Let us return to M. Vigneul-Morville.
 “† No Man before M. de la Bruyere, says M. Menage,
 “has had that Strength, that Justness of Expressi-
 “on which are to be met with in his Book.” *In*
truth, exclaims our Censurer upon this, M. Menage
wou'd have oblig'd us by pointing out the Places of M. de
la Bruyere's Book where this is to be met with: We
might, in return, shew him twice the number, where it
is not to be met with. Why then did he not shew
 them without losing his Time in idle Words? Why
 did he thus abuse his own Leisure, and that of the
 Public, in Printing such Dialogues? We need no
 longer despair of seeing an Edition of Porters and
 Herb-Women's Conversation. *It will rain to day,*
say you; but I don't think so, and will lay Two to One
it will not. Imagine, if you please, something more
 frivolous; it cannot be more so than this Place of
 the *Melanges d'Histoire & de Literature.* For what

imports it us to know, that M. Menage wou'd have oblig'd M. Vigneul-Marville, by quoting to him the Places in the Book of Characters, where the Force and Exactness he speaks of were to be met with; and that if he had so done, M. Vigneul-Marville wou'd have shewn him twice the Number where they are not to be met with? After this wonderful Dialogue, are we a whit the more knowing, or more capable of judging of M. de la Bruyere's Book?

But, adds M. Vigneul-Marville, * it is gratis dictum, and without Consideration what M. Menage said; viz. that till M. de la Bruyere, no Man ever had that Force and Justness of Expression, which he fancies in that Book of Characters. Long before M. de la Bruyere, two famous Authors (not to reckon others) did give to their Expressions all the Strength they were capable of within the Bounds of Reason: And these were Messieurs Nicole and St. Evremont. M. Vigneul-Marville is in the Right. France has produc'd many excellent Authors who have their Merit as well as M. de la Bruyere. Messieurs Nicole and St. Evremont, are of that Number, every body agrees in. M. de Vigneul-Marville, who advances so many Things without proving them, has done well to dispense with that Practice on this occasion. And it is undoubtedly too hardy in M. Menage to prefer M. de la Bruyere to so many famous Writers who have appear'd in this last Age. Such Comparisons are always odious and inconsiderate. But, in my Opinion, M. Menage is not so much to be blam'd as the Compilers of his Conversations. For where is the Man who does not sometimes in a free Conversation let fall some extravagant Thoughts, which he wou'd be far from maintaining in a Public Work?

XV. M. Menage, continues our Critic, adds, that M. de la Bruyere says in one Word what another Man does not so perfectly express in Six. 'Tis commonly just the contrary, M. de la Bruyere affecting to heap Words upon Words, and Thoughts upon Thoughts, without any manner of Necessity. An Example of this is just before me, pag. 90. where he says, that Formality is an Imitation of Wisdom. This Thought is so apparent; that it requires no clearing up by Comparisons fetcht from I know not where. And yet what Turnings and Windings does M. de la Bruyere use to make us comprehend a thing which has not the least Shadow of Difficulty. "A Comedian, says he, exceeds Nature in the Parts he plays: A Poet overloads his Descriptions: A Painter who draws after the Life, forges and exaggerates a Passion, a Contraste, and the Postures; and he that Copies him, unless he measures exactly the Sizes and Proportions, will make his Figures too big, and give more Scope to all the Parts, through the Disposition of the whole Piece, than they have in the Original. 'Tis the same with the Precise or Formal, they are but the Imitators of the Wise." Besides that this whole Discourse smells very strong of Fargon: I wou'd fain know, Who, after this Example, can seriously say (unless it be M. Menage) that M. de la Bruyere delivers in one Word, what another does not so perfectly in Six?

This is what M. de Vigneul-Marville objects against the Reflection of M. de la Bruyere, That Formality is an Imitation of Wisdom. These, you see, are so many definitive Decrees, independant of all Reason. But what's to be done? Every Man has his Method: And our Critic's is, not to prove what he Advances. He may, however, have Reason at the bottom. Let us see whether he has or no.

An Account of the Life and Writings

M. *de la Bruyere* is minded to let us see how Formality is an Imitation of Wisdom, and to that end makes use of several Comparisons. His Thought was clear enough without any of those Comparisons, replies M. *de Vigneul-Marville*. But that Critic is mistaken. For without those Comparisons M. *de la Bruyere's* Thought wou'd have been very imperfect. 'Tis not enough to say that Formality imitates Wisdom, unless we make out how and to what a Degree it does so. Most Virtues consist in a certain Mean, the two Extremes whereof are equally dangerous. Keep short of the just Limits, or go beyond them, you are out of the right way: And nothing is more easy than to mistake it. 'Tis seen every Day. The Miser thinks he is a good Husband: The Prodigal, who laughs at him for a Fool, thinks none but himself knows how to make a right Use of Wealth. Cowards cover their Fear with the glossy Name of Prudence; and the Rash think themselves the truly Brave. All these are ignorant of the just Bounds of the Virtues which they believe they practise. They go beyond, or stop short, for want of knowing that exact Middle, whose two Extremes are equally vicious. And consequently, when one wou'd represent the Imperfection of any of those Vices, he must specify how, and to what a Degree, it imitates some certain Virtue. For to say in general that it is an Imitation of such or such a Virtue, is to give an Idea of it which may as well agree with another Vice that is its direct Opposite. Avarice, for Example, is an Imitation of Frugality, but at the bottom as remote from it as Prodigality it self. M. *de la Bruyere* was too close a Thinker to make such Definitions. He intends to inform us that Formality is an Imitation of Wisdom; but he takes care to teach us Wherein that Imitation consists.

And

And this he does by means of an ingenious Parallel, which, keeping the Mind in play by an agreeable Amusement, discovers clearly, that it is an extravagant Imitation, transgressing the Bounds of Reason. *A Player exceeds Nature in the Parts he plays; A Poet overloads his Descriptions, &c. . . . Just such Imitators of the Wise are the Formal.* What is there in this obscure, or that smells of Jargon? Formality is an ill Imitation of Wisdom, by carrying Things to excess, as a Comedian who over-acts his Part, as a Poet who loads his Descriptions, as a Painter who, drawing after the Life, forces and exaggerates the Passions and Postures which he endeavours to represent, or who intending to copy a Picture, makes the Figures too big. Our Critic sees no Propriety in this; I know not how to help it. But, in my poor Opinion, Comparisons are then just when the Things compar'd agree in that Point upon which the Comparison turns; which can't be found defective in this Parallel. For the Player, the Poet, the Painter, agree all in this; viz. They go beyond certain Bounds, which they ought not to exceed, in like manner as the formal Man who transgresses the Bounds of Wisdom in pretending to imitate it.

Another thing which M. de Vigneul-Marville finds Fault with in this Parallel, is, that there are too many Words us'd in it, whence he concludes, that M. Menage was in the wrong to say, that M. de la Bruyere expresses in one Word, what another does not so perfectly do in Six. But, with his good leave, this Conclusion is somewhat too hasty. For tho' our Author may chance to be a little more diffuse than usual, in a certain Place of his Book, yet it does not follow that he is so every where else. And what wou'd become of the best Writers, ev'n M. de Vigneul-Marville himself, if this way of Reason-

ing were admitted? *Virgil* is obscure in such or such a Place; *Ergo*, he's a pitiful Writer, and does not understand his own Meaning. There is in *Cicero* a disturb'd and very long-winded Period; *Ergo*, *Cicero* knew not how to write. *M. de Vigneul-Marville* reasons ill, in such or such a Place of his Book; he concludes from Particulars to Generals; *Ergo*, he's an ill Logician, who speaks what comes uppermost, and without reflecting. Is it not plain that all these Conclusions are impertinent, and that our Censurer wou'd have Reason to complain against the last? Let him therefore do unto others what he wou'd they shou'd do unto him. Further; this Critic is not only to blame for inferring from a single Passage of the *Characters*, that the Author thereof generally affects to heap Words upon Words without Necessity, but ev'n this very Passage which he quotes to prove it, is, in my Opinion, very ill chosen. *M. de Vigneul-Marville* might perhaps say, that the Author speaks too much in this Place, that he crowds in four Comparisons without a Necessity, since one or two might have suffic'd. But the Question is not whether *M. de la Bruyere* speaks too much, but whether he expresses in few Words what he means to say, and whether it cou'd have been so clearly deliver'd in fewer. These are two very different Things. A Man may be concise and utter much at the same time, especially in writing; for in Conversation a great Talker and a Sayer of Nothing do generally signify but one and the same thing.

XVI. But after so many false Attacks, here is at last one which perhaps will do Execution. 'Tis a Criticism on some Expressions, which *M. de la Bruyere* has made use of in the Passage we just now

examin'd, and which do not seem to M. de Vigneul-Marville to be French. They are four in Number, namely, (1.) *Un Peintre qui fait d' apres nature*, instead of *qui travaille*, *qui peint d' apres nature*: (2.) *Forcer une passion, une contraste, des attitudes*, Expressions barbarous in Painter's Language, if we may believe our Censurer: (3.) The Term *Volume* (scope) apply'd to the Figures of a Picture, tho, according to M. de Vigneul-Marville, that Word is never us'd but to Things that are measur'd and weigh'd: And, (4.) *Les pieces d' un tableau*, instead of the Figures of a Picture, the word *pieces* being appropriated to Heraldry, as M. de la Bruyere knows or knows not, adds our Critic very politely.

I know not but the Solidity of some of these Decisions may admit of Dispute: But I'm under a strong Temptation not to contest this petty Victory to M. de Vigneul-Marville, were it only to encourage him to impart to us a more ample Criticism upon the *Characters of the Age*. For you must know all that you have hitherto seen, is only a Prelude to a pitcht Battel. M. de Vigneul-Marville had compos'd a much larger Work * which he suppress after he had heard of M. de la Bruyere's Death. This here is but a small Sample whereby we may judge of the whole Piece. But if I grant to M. de Vigneul-Marville that he had Reason to censure these 4 Expressions in M. de la Bruyere's Book, it is on Condition that he will not abuse this small Advantage, as if it gave him a Right to conclude that M. de la Bruyere can't write French, † That he has no regular Stile, that he writes at random; || and that most of his Expressions

* P. 345.

† Melanges d'Histoire, &c. p. 336.

|| P. 339.

ere forc'd, improper, and unnatural. This would be imitating those Critics mention'd by Madam Des-Houlieres, who for a Word well or ill plac'd approve or condemn a whole Work. I take M. de Vigneul-Marville to be too sensible a Man to give into such an Excess. He knows that Homer nods sometimes, and that Faults are found in the best Writers. He is an Author himself, and consequently may commit an Over-sight as well as Pindar, Virgil, Horace, and all the most celebrated Ancient and Modern Authors.

Again, tho I'm not inclin'd to dispute with M. de Vigneul-Marville the Glory of having justly censur'd the Expressions afore-mention'd, especially this, *Un peintre qui fait d' apres nature*, yet I'm oblig'd to warn the Public, that this Censurer, producing no other Proof for the Solidity of this Censure, than his own Authority, and the Knowledge which he pretends to have in the Language of Painters, People would do well not to trust him without good Security: Since there are to be found, ev'n in M. de Vigneul-Marville's Book, some Expressions taken from Painting, which raise a Doubt whether he understands the Terms of that Art so well as he fancies he does; for Instance, when he says, that *M. de la Bruyere travaille plus en detrempe qu' a l' huile*. We say, *peindre en huile*, I am sure of it; and can prove it by undeniable Authorities: But I doubt whether it can be said, *peindre a l' huile*. I refer it to the Masters.

XVII. I know not how I came so easily to believe that M. de Vigneul-Marville wou'd use with Moderation that small Advantage I just now granted him. Far from doing so, that Critic is grown so haughty, he begins to forget himself; so difficult

ficult a thing is it to use a Victory with Moderation. *It were an endless Task*, * says he, *to pick out all the forc'd, improper, and unnatural Expressions which are palm'd upon us for Beauties and Refinements of the Language.* These are terrible Menaces, but which, to M. de la Bruyere's Comfort, will never be put in Execution. M. de Vigneul-Marville is pleas'd to save him the Confusion and Shame of an entire Defeat. He will be content to give him two or three Thrusts, to let the World see what he cou'd do if he wou'd fight his best. And yet, to judge of him by those two or three Thrusts, our Critic does not seem to be in Reality so formidable as he wou'd make us believe. You shall judge of it.

" 1. † True Greatness suffers it self to be touch'd and handled: *Is this*, says he, *to speak naturally and properly, which M. de la Bruyere so often wishes to see done? This, in good French, and according to Reason, proceeds our Critic, cannot be spoken but of corporeal Things, which are handl'd and are tangible.* And yet I know an ingenious Person who pretends to write Books and thinks he understands the Rules and Beauties of the French Tongue, who makes use of the Term *handle* in speaking of Things which are not corporeal. And this same Person (who wou'd think it ?) is M. de Vigneul-Marville himself, who makes that use of it twice, and in the same Work wherein he so haughtily censures M. de la Bruyere for using it only once, *risum teneatis amici?* *A Man*, says M. de Vigneul-Marville p. 251. of his *Melanges*, *a Man has compos'd a Sermon, a Plea, or a*

* P. 340.

† Ch. 11. Of Personal Merit.

Speech, with a great deal Care. He has HANDLED, turn'd, set in Order his Thoughts. If this rigid Censor is of Opinion that nothing but corporeal Things can be handl'd, cou'd he handle Thoughts? Let him explain this Riddle. Good Writers, says he in another Place, imitate the Laconic Stile, which is not less difficult to HANDLE.

2. Let us pass to the second Remark. † Is it proper to say, to throw Profoundness into certain Writings? M. de la Bruyere says it in his Chapter of Polite Learning. But good Sense and Custom do not speak so. After this, there's nothing more to be said. How can such formal Decisions be resisted! But yet why might not M. de la Bruyere use that Expression, since M. de St. Evremont, who, as our Critic very well says, cloaths his Thoughts, which are noble, with bold Expressions, but ever just, ever proper to his Subject, made no difficulty to say, * When the Choice of a Subject depends upon the Orator, he ought to make it susceptible of Force and Ornament. He ought to throw Order into his Design, and Connexion into his Thoughts. Why may not Profoundness be thrown into a Writing, as well as Order into a Design, and Connexion into Thoughts? This is another Enigma, which our Critic is desir'd to explain, if such be his Will and Pleasure.

3. He adds a third Remark, which he expresses in these Terms: To say as M. de la Bruyere does, p. 172. in speaking of such as can't keep a Secret, that you see through their Breast, that they are transparent; is it not to carry one's Expressions too far? Was it not enough to have said: They don't move their

† P. 172. Of his *Melanger*.

* M. St. Evremont. Of Eloquence, p. 293. Vol. I.

Lips, and yet are understood; you read the Secret on their Forehead, and in their Eyes.

Here it might be proper to speak of the use we ought to make of *figurative Terms*. Upon this Occasion I wou'd say what M. de Fontenelle somewhere says concerning the sublime Stile, that *a Man shou'd not give into it without an absolute Necessity*. It is, however, certain that figurative Terms are very proper upon some Occasions. But without pretending to treat of this Matter to the bottom, it seems to me that they may be employ'd for two Reasons. The first, when proper Terms are wanting for the expressing our Minds, which very often happens, and which can't be so much attributed to the Poverty of Languages, as to the Ignorance of Mankind, who not knowing Things in themselves, cannot speak of them but by way of Comparison. The other Reason why we may use figurative Terms in a Discourse, is to divert the Mind in representing to it by corporeal Images what has been already express'd to it or what is immediately after express'd to it in Terms proper, and which paint the thing as it is in it self. For in that Case, the figurative Expressions having nothing obscure, do agreeably amuse the Mind, by tracing to it in a sensible manner, what a proper Expression makes it comprehend with an entire Exactness. And this, if I'm not mistaken, is the only use we ought to make of figurative Terms, when we are not under an indispensable Necessity of making use of 'em. 'Tis like a Debauch of the Mind which cannot but please, when it comes *a propos*, but which otherwise is offensive, displeasing, and infallibly disturbs it.

I leave to others the Care of applying what I say to this Passage of the *Charactens* which has fallen under the Censure of M. de Vigneul-Marville. These
are

are Things dependant upon the Taste and Sentiment, and can hardly be made intelligible to those who don't perceive them of themselves.

XVIII. Lastly, Our Critic can't endure that M. Menage shou'd make a Doubt that M. de la Bruyere's Way of Writing is close and connected. *Why not, * says he? How many poor Painters daily copy bad Originals? Nevertheless, adds he, I agree with M. Menage, that no body of a good Taste will ever imitate the bad Stile of M. de la Bruyere.* A glorious Conclusion, and worthy of the Exordium! M. de la Bruyere was not only likely to have some Imitators, but he has actually had great Numbers of them. M. de Vigneul-Marville cannot be ignorant of it; the Thing has made too great a Noise in the Republic of Letters. Some have plunder'd his Words and Expressions; Others his Thoughts; and all have deck'd themselves with the Title of his Work, as if it were sufficient, in order to have a share in the Glory of an excellent Writer, to make Books under the same Title with him. For a considerable While there was nothing printed but Works which bore the Name of *Characters*, or something like it. *Ouvrage dans le gout des Caracteres. Les differens Caracteres des femmes du siecle. Caracteres & Portraits Critiques sur les defauts ordinaires des hommes. Portraits Serieux & Critiques. Caracteres tirez de l'Ecriture sainte, & appliquez aux Mœurs de ce siecle. Caracteres naturels des hommes, en forme de dialogue. Suite des Caracteres de Theophraste & des Mœurs de ce siecle, &c.* Nothing was seen but *Characters*. The Booksellers Shops were cramp'd with them. But, pray, cou'd the Censurer of M. de la Bruyere have better shewn the

Merit of the *Characters of the Age*, than by putting us in mind of those Swarms of Writers produc'd by a desire of imitating that excellent Author? What more proper to raise the Value of *M. de la Bruyere*, than so many dull Copies, most of them despis'd by the Public, and all so very much inferior to their Original?

But perhaps *M. de Vigneul-Marville* was of Opinion, that among those Imitators, there are some that may vie with *M. de la Bruyere*. How then comes it that he has not nam'd them? Why wou'd he lose so fair an Opportunity of convincing us of the Extent of his Understanding, and Solidity of his Judgment? For, infallibly, he wou'd have carry'd off the Honour of so glorious a Discovery; since it does not appear that the Public has yet preferr'd or equall'd any of those Imitators to him whom they have endeavour'd to copy. One of the most hardy, but not the wisest, has assum'd the haughty Title of *the Modern Theophrastus*: And this Person, they say, is he that comes nearest to *M. de la Bruyere*. But if he follows him, 'tis only by Track, and at a great Distance, as was lately made appear by a * Writer, who after he had very well demonstrated the Defects of the *Modern Theophrastus*, did not do strict Justice to *M. de la Bruyere*. Let this be said without Consequence. For besides that the Attacks of this new Critic have been already † repell'd, I wou'd not willingly embroil my self with him, after having crawn upon my Back so formidable an Adversary as *M. de Vigneul-Marville*.

* In a Book intitul'd, *Sentiments Critiques sur les Caracteres de M. de la Bruyere*.

† In a Book intitul'd, *Apologie de M. de la Bruyere, ou Reponse à la Critique des Caracteres de Theophraste*.

XIX. And now I spy Land, as *Diogenes* said. There remains nothing more for me to do, but to examine some Reflexions of our Critic upon the Persons who have approv'd of *M. de la Bruyere's* Book. If they are not superficial Wits, says he bluntly, I can aver that they are either such who read Books superficially and without examining, or who are under an Obligation of praising *M. de la Bruyere*. I leave you to judge, after what we have seen, whether it becomes him to speak thus. He afterwards names some of those Approvers, and endeavours to lessen their Authority.

XX. The First is Father *Bouhours*, who, * says he, has extoll'd *M. de la Bruyere* to the Sky, by ranking him among the celebrated Authors who furnish'd out his *Collection of Select Thoughts*: This, adds he, was done, I believe, as much out of Policy as any thing else. He believes it; so let him; but what signifies it for us to know what he believes, if he does not let us know the Foundation of his Belief? Another need only publish in Print that he believes the contrary; and then there's Tit for Tat; --- he and *M. Vigneul-Marville* wou'd be upon a Par; the one never a whit more advanc'd than the other. And which of the two shall we believe? But after all that can be said, continues our Censor, still in the Tone of a Man who will be credited upon his Word, I don't think that *F. Bouhours* ever prais'd *M. de la Bruyere* absolutely and without mental Restriction. He's too able a Jesuit to have gone that Length purely and simply. This is what is call'd, affronting People without Reason or any manner of Necessity. Besides, adds he, if *M. de la Bruyere* is an excellent Writer, all *F. Bouhours's* Rules must be said to be false; which that Fa-

ther does not believe, nor I neither. If it be not wasting Ink and Paper with Impunity, let any Man tell me what this can mean; for my part, I see nothing therein but Words which signify nothing. What are those Rules which M. de la Bruyere has violated? Are they all the Rules of Father *Bouhours*, or only some of them? Again, Are those Rules bottom'd upon incontestable Custom, or on his Authority who publish'd them? Can a Man be condemn'd without bringing a Bill of Indictment? And can his Indictment be drawn without seeing the Evidence? M. de Vigneul-Marville is a little too negligent of Forms, for a Man who has study'd the Civil Law.

Further, By the Manner in which he speaks of the Esteem which Father *Bouhours* had publickly manifested for M. de la Bruyere's Book, wou'd not one swear that Father *Bouhours* only prais'd it in loose Terms, and without giving any Reason for his Esteem? And yet 'tis just the contrary. For, not content with saying that M. de la Bruyere has a solid and agreeable Way of Thinking, he draws from his Book Thoughts which are actually full of Solidity, Agreeableness and Delicacy. For Example, after having said that * the Thought of one of the Ancients concerning the Advantage which Great Men have of doing good to those beneath them, seems to him very beautiful and noble, he adds; *A Modern Author, i. e. M. de la Bruyere, turns the same Thought into an agreeable Satire: "The Great, says he, delight in opening Walks in Forests, making fine Terraces, gilding their Ceilings, making Water-Works and Orangerees; but to restore Content to a distracted Mind or Joy to an afflicted Soul, to prevent extreme Necessity*

* *Pensees ingenieuses, p. 194.*

“ in the Miserable, or to relieve them, is what
 “ their Curiosity reaches not to.” If *M. de Vigneul-Marville* believed that this Place was ill
 Thought and worse Express’d, why did he not shew
 it by correcting what he saw false in it, and by ex-
 pressing it in a more delicate and agreeable Man-
 ner? That had been the true way to please the
 Public in censuring *M. de la Bruyere’s* Book. He,
 by that means, might have giv’n Authority to his
 Criticism, weaken’d the Testimony of *Father*
Bouhours, and have pleas’d his Readers by instruct-
 ing them. “ There is, says *M. de la Bruyere* else-
 “ where, a Country where Joys are visible, but
 “ false; and the Grievs hidden, but real.

“ The Court Life, says he again, is a serious
 “ melancholy Game, and requires Application;
 “ a Man must range his Pieces and his Batteries,
 “ have a Design, pursue it, thwart his Adversa-
 “ ries, venture sometimes, and sometimes play
 “ capriciously; yet after all his Measures and Con-
 “ trivances, he will be often beat; when he thinks
 “ he has manag’d his Men well, and is in a fair
 “ way to succeed, one more Skillful, or more Luc-
 “ ky, gets the Game.

Father Bouhours thought fit to insert those two
 Passages in his Collection of *Ingenious Thoughts*;
 and, according to him, *such Definitions or Descriptions*
where the Antithesis plays a little, have something
very agreeable. Is *M. de Vigneul-Marville* of another
 Mind? Does he believe that *Father Bouhours* did
 not speak sincerely on this Occasion, or that he
 was in the wrong to commend those Thoughts,
 which, according to him, are false and unpolitely
 express’d? Why then did he not make appear what
 Falshy they contain’d? Or if he did not think
 them false, but only ill turn’d, why did he not give
 them

them a more lively and agreeable Turn, to convince us at once of the Beauty of his Wit, the Unskilfulness of M. de la Bruyere, and the ill Taste of Father Bouhours? But there's yet time enough for that Proof. Let him discover to us that rare Wonder, and we will look on him as the *Phoenix* of the Modern Writers.

XXI. After Father Bouhours, our Critic brings on the Stage *l'Abbè Fleury*, who, in his Speech of Thanks to the French Academy, made the *Elogium* of M. de la Bruyere, in whose Place he succeeded. These Praises can be of no great Weight, according to M. de Vigneul-Marville, because the Complaisance which M. l'Abbè Fleury makes Profession of, oblig'd him to praise with Excess M. de la Bruyere; besides, the Academy requires from their Candidates such Incense, as a kind of Tribute which they owe to the Memory of those who chalk'd out for them the Road to Immortality. This is all that cou'd have been said of that *Elogium*, had it been nothing else but a heap of loose and general Epithets, as proper to any other as M. de la Bruyere. But if *l'Abbè Fleury's* Design was to paint M. de la Bruyere to the Life, to draw his true Lineaments, and to give us the Character of his Wit and Writings, as there's all the Reason in the World to believe it was, M. de Vigneul-Marville is to blame to decry that *Elogium*, without taking it to Pieces, and shewing that it cannot suit the Person who is the Subject of it. M. de la Bruyere is not so much concern'd in this Censure as the Author of his Panegyric. 'Tis the Works of an Author which makes his true *Elogium*, and not study'd Speeches publish'd in his Praise when he is no more. M. de la Bruyere had swept the Stakes of the public Esteem, before he was prais'd by *l'Abbè Fleury* or by the Secretary of the Academy (*l'Abbè Regnier*)

Regnier) who in the Answer he made to the former, painted so lively and so delicately that peculiar Talent which M. de la Bruyere had in discovering the most secret Mysteries of the Inside of Mankind, and penetrating into what they take most Pains to conceal from the Eyes of the World. It wou'd be a Pleasure to me to transcribe all that he says on that Occasion, if it were not to be seen prefix'd to the last Edition of the Characters. And I wonder M. de Vigneul-Marville neglected to speak of it.

XXII. But how can we excuse his forgetting M. St. Evremond? For that famous Author, whose Decisions are always so Rational in M. de Vigneul-Marville's own Opinion, has prais'd M. de la Bruyere, and that too by solidly reflecting upon a Passage of his Book of Characters. These are his Words: * *It were an unpardonable Fault to pass from a Metaphor with which we have begun, to a new one, and so to couple together Images which have no Relation to each other. When a Man is attentive to writing well, he will continue and support the same Idea.* "I pity him, says the Author of the Characters. I conclude he is founde'r'd. He is lost, and out of the way. "That is not sailing near the Wind; That is not the way to arrive at the delightful Haven of Fortune." You see he took care to mingle nothing foreign to the first Image which he gave for expressing what a rich Man sometimes thinks of the Conduct of a Philosopher. This last is represented as upon the Sea. The Rich Man foresees that he will founder there. He looks on him as out of the way. He judges that he is not sailing near the Wind; and that he will never reach the Port of Good Fortune. There is not a single Word in all this; but is a Kin

to each other. He had been shipbreck'd in the Haven, if, after all these Expressions taken from Navigation, he had happen'd to say; This is not sailing near the Wind: This is not the way to build a Fortune. This new Image of Building join'd to those of the Marine which go before, wou'd have produc'd a disagreeable Effect; whereas the whole being of a Piece, the Discourse becomes clear and easy.

This is an Elogium which ought not to be suspected by our Critic. These are not vague Reflections which fall no where. They are substantial Reasons, which make us, as it were, touch the Thing with our Finger. But pray observe and admire how different Men's Judgments are. M. St. Evremont looks on M. de la Bruyere as an Author attentive to well Writing, who knows how to continue and support the same Idea, which is perhaps one of the greatest Secrets in the Art of Writing, and which contributes most to the Perspicuity, Exactness and Beauty of a Style: And according to M. de Vigneul-Marville, M. de la Bruyere writes by chance, and has no settl'd Style. Some malicious People have said upon this, that if M. St. Evremont never departs from Reason, M. de Vigneul-Marville is not always so fortunate.

XXIII. The third Approver of M. de la Bruyere, which our Critic has thought fit to produce, is M. Menage, who, * he says, has mightily heighten'd M. de la Bruyere's Characters. But this same Menage us'd to speak Things inconsiderately, adds M. de Vigneul-Marville: His Menagiana sufficiently proves this. Methinks when he praises or blames, he commonly

does it for talking sake, and to fill up a Gap in Conversation, rather than to do it with Judgment, and with the Balance in his Hand. Without attempting here to defend either M. Menage or his *Menagiana*, I will leave You to conclude, after what I've said, which of the two, M. Menage or M. Vigneul-Marville, is most guilty of Talking for Talk-sake, and of Praising or Dispraising without knowing Why or Wherefore. But how comes our Critic to say nothing of the *Elogium* which M. Menage made of the Translation of *Theophrastus's* Characters? It is, * says he, very beautiful, and excellent French, and shews that the Author perfectly understands the Greek Tongue. I may say that I have seen a great many Things in it which, perhaps for want of Attention, escap'd me in the Greek. This is very express, and ought to be reckon'd as Something, coming from a Man, who, by the Confession of all Europe, understood the Greek Tongue extremely well. Perhaps M. de Vigneul-Marville is preparing to give us a New Version of *Theophrastus's* Characters, more exact and truer French than that of M. de la Bruyere. He can't do a better Thing. For besides that he wou'd by this means do a considerable Piece of Service to his Country, in presenting it with a better Translation of a Work which deserves to be in every body's Hands, he wou'd at length recover the Public from that prodigious Infatuation under which they labour with respect to this M. de la Bruyere, (if I may be allow'd to speak the Language of M. Vigneul-Marville,) who will doubtless have the Credit of introducing that beautiful Expression among polite Men, with whom I believe it was never much in use.

* *Menagiana*, Vol. II. p. 241.

XXIV. Lastly, Our Critic supposes I know not what Defenders of M. de la Bruyere, who shelter and fortify themselves with the Esteem which the Gentlemen of the Royal Academy have discover'd for his Person and Writings, by admitting him into their Society. And to this M. Vigneul-Marville answers, That * *those Gentlemen wou'd not have chosen him, had he not been recommended by the King, who, by declaring himself in his behalf, made others do so too, as he owns in his Characters, tho' he expressly declares in his Speech to the Academy, that there was no Mediation us'd for such Admission, except the Singularity of his Book.* But that Recommendation of the Prince, and that Confession made by M. de la Bruyere, are mere Chimera's. And this we have already made appear, and with so much Evidence, that it wou'd be to waste Time and to abuse the Patience of those who shall read this Discourse, to insist any more upon it.

But supposing that M. de la Bruyere was receiv'd into the French Academy, at the Recommendation of his Prince, why may we not look on that Favour as a Proof of the Merit of him who was honour'd with it? It looks as if the Author wou'd conclude that a Prince never makes a right Choice, and that his Favour is not more judicious than that of the People, † as M. de la Bruyere has been wrongfully accus'd of Thinking. M. Boileau was admitted into the Academy at the King's Recommendation, and in all likelihood wou'd never have been admitted without it: Does this imply that he did not deserve to

* page 138.

† Sentimens Critiques sur les Caracteres de M. de la Bruyere, p. 45.

be admitted into that Illustrious Body? I know what may be said in Answer to this; That, *if the Prince's Favour does not exclude Merit, so neither does it suppose it,* according to M. de la Bruyere's Judicious Observation:

*Two Kings are Kings, they're still of Human Make,
And may, in Verse, like other Men, mistake.*

This is true; I don't deny it. But yet methinks it is no less certain, that the Esteem which a Prince shall have testify'd for an Author generally esteem'd, as M. de la Bruyere is, ought to weigh much more with us, than the Disgusts of a splenetic Critic, who may have defam'd his *Person* without Reason, and censur'd his *Writings* without Understanding them: And that M. Vignoul-Marville has done so, will manifestly appear to any One who shall have perus'd the preceding Sheets of this small Piece.

IN the Year 1693, M. de la Bruyere was Chosen a Member of the French Academy, in the Room of M. L'Abbé de la Chambre; and Dying in 1696, was himself succeeded in the same Place by Monsieur L'Abbe Fleuri, who upon that Occasion spoke of Monsieur De la Bruyere, (or as the French call it, made his Elogy) in the following Words.

However sooner or later it may be, yet the Public is always observ'd to do Justice to an Author; and we may take it for granted, that a Book which has been Read and frequently Enquir'd after by the whole World, cannot be without its peculiar Merit. Such is the Work of that Friend, whose late and surprizing Loss we at this Time deplore; and whose Place you have been pleas'd to allow me the Honour of Supplying: A Work very singular in its Kind, and in the Opinion of some Judges, even Superior to that Great * Original, which the Author himself did at first only propose to Imitate. In drawing the Characters of others, he has perfectly well express'd his own: One may see in 'em a vast Strength of Thinking, and the most profound Reflexions upon Men's Manners and their Understandings, together with that Great Erudition, which was so Remarkable upon all fit Occasions in his private Conversation; agreeably and usefully mixt and running through the Whole.

* Theophrastus.

He was particularly well acquainted with the Living and Dead Languages, and indeed there was no Kind of Learning to which he was a Stranger.

In his Characters one may observe, that his Criticism is severely exact, and his Expression lively; that his Turns are very Artful, and his Pictures sometimes purposely loaded and over-colour'd, that they might not appear too like. His Boldness and Force are manag'd so as not to exclude either Pleasure or Delicacy, tho at the same Time we may see that the governing Spirit of the Whole is a Predominant and Implacable Hatred of *Vice*, with an avow'd Love of *Virtue*. In fine, the Crown of the Work, and which we who are most nearly concern'd for the Author are the Witnesses of, is that Holy Spirit of True Religion that shines in it. This Piece then, Gentlemen, will happily be one of those which you do in some Manner seem to adopt for your own, by receiving their Authors among you; one of those Beautiful and Useful Works, that you Consecrate to Immortality.

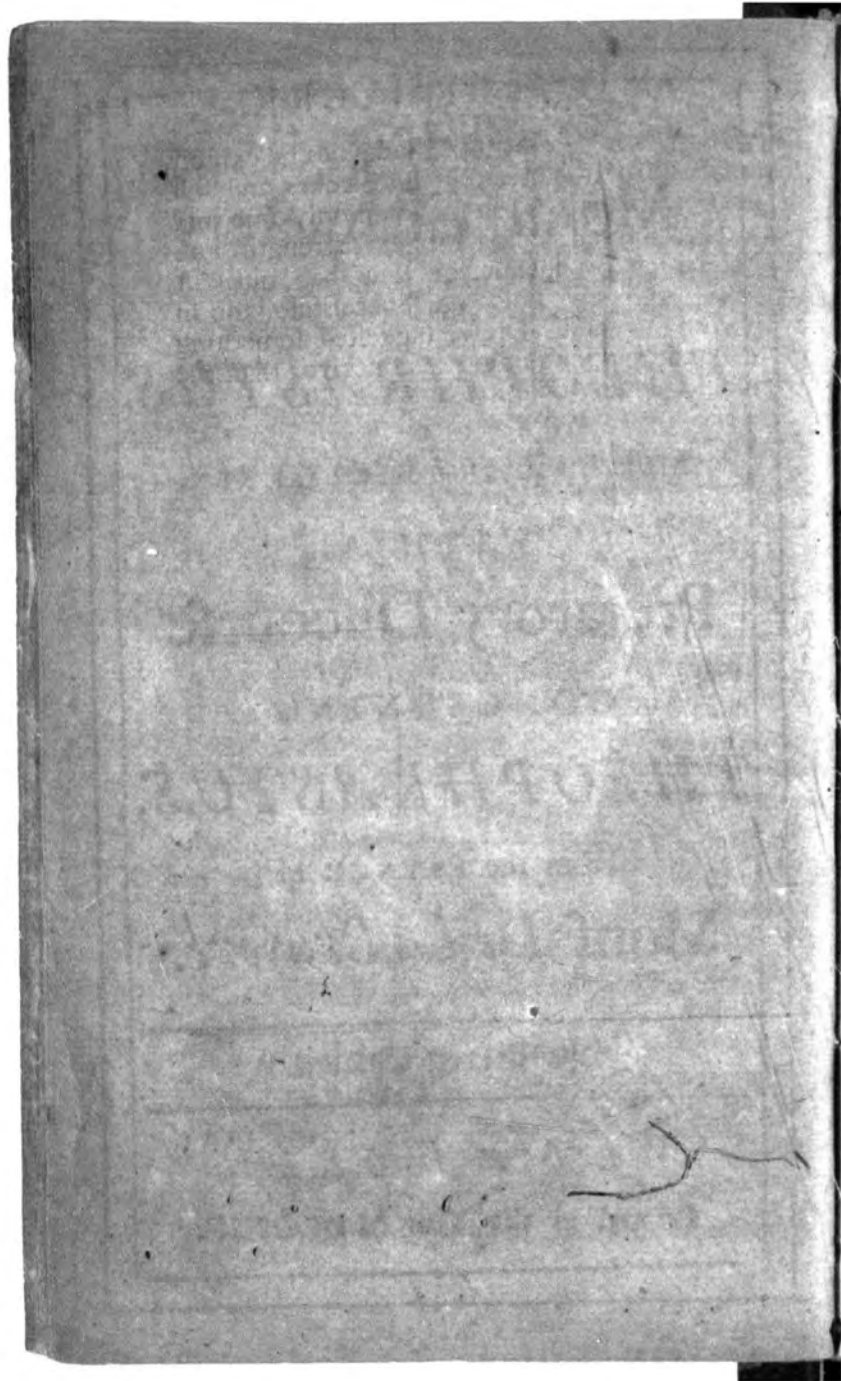
After Monsieur L'Abbè Fleuri had finish'd his Discourse, Monsieur L'Abbè Regnier replying to him, took an Occasion to speak thus of Monsieur de la Bruyere.

Our Loss of that Excellent Member of our Academy, to whom you succeed, is Great. He was a Person of a very Extraordinary Genius; Nature seem'd to take a Pleasure in Revealing the Secrets of Mankind to him, in shewing him the Mysterious Inside of Human Nature, and continually exposing those Things to his Eyes, which Men labour to conceal with the utmost Care from the Knowledge of the World. With what Force of

Ex-

Expression, what Beautiful Colours has he express
them! A Writer Masterly in his Strokes and full
of Fire, who by a Turn uncommonly fine and
peculiar to himself, cou'd infuse a Strength into
Words which of themselves they had not: A
Painter fortunately Bold and Successful, who in
every thing that he Drew, suggested something
more for the Understanding to conceive, than the
Eye could possibly take in.

A



THE
Moral Characters
OF
THEOPHRASTUS.

Made ENGLISH from the GREEK.

WITH A
Prefatory Discourse
CONCERNING
THEOPHRASTUS,

From the FRENCH of
Monf^r De La Bruyere.

The Sixth Edition.

L O N D O N :
Printed in the Year M DCC XIII.



A
Prefatory Discourse

CONCERNING
THEOPHRASTUS.



Cannot conceive how it's possible for Man to entertain a more vain and ridiculous Thought, than to imagine, when he writes on any Art or Science, he shall be able to escape all sort of Censure, and obtain the good Opinion of every Reader.

For without enlarging on the Diversity of Human Minds, as prodigious as that of their Faces, which makes some relish Things Speculative, others Things Practical; inclines some to turn over Books to exercise their Fancy, others to form their Judgment; that

A Prefatory Discourse

amongst Readers, some love the Force of Demonstration, others to judge nicely, or form Ratiocinations and Conjectures; I confine my self only to that Science which describes Manners, examines Men, and discovers their Characters; and I dare say, that Works of this kind, which touch so near, and whose Subject is Men themselves, will not easily meet with a favourable Reception.

Some of the Learned relish nothing but the Apothegms of the Ancients, and Examples drawn from the *Romans*, *Grecians*, *Persians* and *Egyptians*; the History of the present Time is insipid to them; they have no manner of Concern for Men whom they converse and live with, and make no Observations on their Manners.

The Ladies and Courtiers, on the contrary, and all who have a great deal of Wit without Learning, indifferent for those things which preceded them, are eager after those which pass before their Eyes, and as it were under their Hands; these they pry into, these they apprehend; they continually observe the Persons about them, are charm'd with the Descriptions and Representations made of their Contemporaries and Fellow-Citizens, in short, of those who resemble themselves, to whom yet they think they do not bear the least Resemblance; insomuch,
that

that those who instruct us from the Pulpit, often judge it expedient to neglect preaching solid Divinity, to gain Men by their own Weakness, and reduce them to their Duty by things which please their Palate, and are within their Comprehension.

The Court is either ignorant of the City, or has so contemptible an Opinion of it, as not to take the Ridicule, or to be the least touch'd with the Images might be drawn from thence; and if on the contrary, the Court is represented, as it always is, full of Intrigues and Designs, the City does not find wherewithal from this Sketch, to satisfy Curiosity, and form a just Idea of a Country, which can no otherwise be known but by living there. On the other side, it is not very natural for Men to agree about the Beauty or Delicacy of a Moral Treatise, which designs and paints themselves, and where they cannot avoid seeing their own Faces; they fly into Passion and condemn it; they no longer approve the Satyr than when it looses its Hold, and keeping at a distance from them, fixes its Teeth on Some-body else.

What Probability is there to please all the different Tastes of Men, by one single Tract of Morality? Some look for Definitions, Divisions, Tables and Method; are desirous to have explain'd what Virtue is in general, and